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SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Storm-damaged Buchanan restaurant open for business again

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BUCHANAN — A popular downtown Buchanan restaurant has reopened for business after storm-related damage shut their doors for close to one month.

Thistledown & Row, 103 Days Ave., Buchanan, reopened Thursday after sustaining damage from a storm system that rolled through Michiana March 30. The storm removed large portions of the roof from the historic building, which led to water coming into the building. After weeks of hard work by staff and volunteers alike, the necessary repairs were made to allow the restaurant to make its awaited return.

"A huge thank you to everyone who has reached out in the past few weeks and who has offered sympathy or help," the restaurant posted on its Facebook page. "The outpouring of love from the community has truly been so wonderful and inspiring, and we are so thankful to each and every one of you."

The restaurant features a mix of modern and classic menu favorites, utilizing local, in-season ingredients from its sister company, Flatwater Farms, an organic farm located in the Buchanan and Niles Townships. Organic craft ciders and meads brewed using Michigan apples and honey as well as other locally-sourced ingredients will be served on draft alongside Michigan wines and hand-crafted non-alcoholic beverages.

A GoFundMe titled "Aid for Thistledown & Row's Storm Repairs" was created by a community member to support the restaurant staff who lost wages during the closure. For more information on the restaurant and to see Thistledown & Row's full menu go online to thistledownandrow.com.

Edwardsburg village council talks storm recovery, Gunn Park shelter

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Publications Contributor

EDWARDSBURG — Recovery from recent storm damage was discussed throughout most of the agenda at this week's Edwardsburg Village Council meeting.

Village President Dennis Peak commented on the damage throughout the village, expressing his gratitude that the destruction, though substantial, was not worse, and thanking staff for their efforts during the clean-up.

"If you see those guys, tell them thank you," said Peak of the staff.

Richard Low of the Department of Public Works reported on the clean up, noting that staff was on site within twenty minutes of the storm passing through. Six trees in Gunn Park were felled, though no structures were damaged. Two homes in the village were reported damaged, along with eleven vehicles. The well field experienced minimal damage, with one of the buildings losing part of the roof and a well hatch being blown two hundred yards away. The field lost power for five days, though backup generators purchased last year kept the area functioning.

"We could not have maintained it with just tower water," said Low. "You paid for those generators in one."

Staff also made use of the grapple purchased last fall, expediting the clean up.

Edwardsburg Cemetery had at least twenty-seven trees down from the storm, along with damage to several stones. One older grave vault was surfaced by the storm. Low is working with health departments at the local and state level, as well as Paul Mayhew Funeral Home, to safely and properly repair the damage. He noted that special care was taken during the tree removal process, with assistance from Kachur Tree Service, to avoid disturbing graves.

"It's been a delicate process," said Low.

The construction site for the new Edwardsburg Branch of the Cass District Library had several trees fall, but the existing structure avoided harm.

The village continues to discuss rental fees for the Gunn Park shelter. Several members of the council expressed that the fees are meant to keep those who use the pavilion responsible for its care, but are not meant as a revenue generator. A recommendation from the Parks Boards is expected at next month's village council meeting.

The Fire Board reported the purchase of an emergency key box that will give emergency officials access to participating commercial buildings without damage to them. Access to the box will be given to particular officials by codes, which are trackable, to avoid abuse.

The council approved Resolution 25-02 Establishing

See TALKS, Page A7

'IT'S INSPIRATIONAL'

Edwardsburg community rallies to organize wedding for employee battling cancer

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

EDWARDSBURG – The Edwardsburg Public Schools community rallied to make sure two employees had a wedding to remember following the bride's cancer diagnosis.

Family, friends and community members gathered around the arch in front of the district administration building Friday, April 18 to celebrate the marriage of employees Brant and Samantha Byerly.

"Everything is wonderful," Brant said. "We're just grateful for the great community at Edwardsburg and everybody coming out and showing love."

"It was all so beautiful," Samantha added. "We couldn't ask for anything more. They took the time to put all of this together for us and help us out. It's all so amazing and wonderful. We're forever grateful for everything that they have done

See WEDDING, Page A8

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Family, friends and community members gathered around the arch in front of the district administration building Friday to celebrate the marriage of employees Brant and Samantha Byerly.

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Niles Township board approves ordinances to allow adult-use marijuana businesses

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — After several months of deliberation, the Niles Charter Township Board of Trustees voted to approve a recreational marijuana ordinance that will allow an unlimited number of retail establishments in the township.

The township's proposed Recreational (Adult Use) Marijuana Establishment Ordinance and its amended zoning ordinance were both adopted by the Niles Charter Township Board. The zoning ordinance passed 5-2 – with trustees Herschel Hoese and Chris Vella casting dissenting votes – and the establishment ordinance passed 7-0. Treasurer Jim Ringler recused himself from the marijuana-related agenda items citing conflict of interest.

Marijuana establishments must be located in the General Business zoning district and would have frontage on S. 11th Street between State Line Road and Fulkerson Road. The marijuana ordinance will go into effect eight days after approval.

See ALLOW, Page A8

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Township Supervisor Marge Durm-Hiatt (Center) speaks during the Niles Charter Township Board of Trustees meeting at the Township's temporary offices at the Greater Niles Senior Center, 1109 Bell Road.

OBITUARIES

Christine Cosey
Mary Whitney
Christine Kuhn
Rev Ronald M. Smith
Brent James Hagadorn
Marvin Schindler II
George Paquette Jr.
Fred Stanley Haas Jr.
Dale K. Woods
Anthony B McCabe
Richard Buss
Marcile V. Buck-Williams
Rickey Willis
Jill Mari Garmire
Betty Heimberger

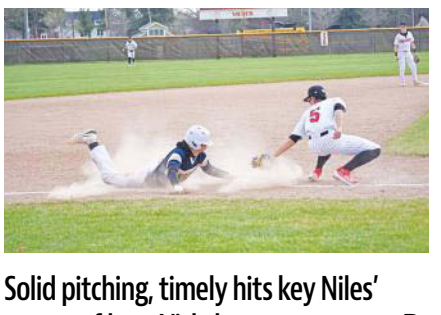
A6

FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

"Help each other."

A2



Solid pitching, timely hits key Niles' sweep of host Vicksburg

B1

FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip, quip or blip? Call or text Frankly at 219-455-2349 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com

Bless our dearly departed Pope and pray for guidance on his replacement.

Pope Francis was a wonderful human being who loved our world. He will be missed.

Pope Francis was a wonderful leader and helped open up our eyes and create dialogue about things the Church never spoke about. I hope the new Pope continues in that journey.

We need to rid ourselves of the chaos that's being created in government. These self-inflicted wounds are driving a wedge between us and are friends around the world.

Economics 101 tells us the trade deficit is not bad for our economy. Our nation has grown leaps ahead of other nations in building wealth since WWII. The only thing killing our economy is bad policies and flip flops.

Now Trump is blaming Powell for not lowering interest rates to fix his horrible trade threats and implementations. 11 trillion has been lost since inauguration day so far.

Millionaires are born during bear markets. Buy your stocks and keep planning for your future.

Looking for yard workers to cut grass and trim bushes. Leaves are everywhere and need to be raked.

Help each other.

Good luck future high school graduates. Life is just getting started for you. The best is yet to come and that's much more than a cliche'.

WEATHER

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	60% Chance of Storms	30% Chance Rain Showers	30% Chance of Rain
61° 39°	64° 53°	80° 69°	83° 50°	55° 42°	66° 51°

NILES TOWNSHIP BREAKS GROUND ON COMMUNITY PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — Niles Township Board of Trustees members and other community leaders gathered Friday, April 18 for a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the construction of upgrades at Community Park.

Niles Charter Township was awarded with a $908,700 DNR Spark Grant to fund improvements to Community Park, including the construction of eight pickleball courts and a new shelter to replace the old building that has been demolished. The awarded grant is the largest in the history of Niles Charter Township. Construction is expected to be completed by late July to early August.

The park shelter, which was built circa 1940, was shuttered in 2020 due to COVID and was in poor condition. Last year, the Niles Township Park Board commissioned Wightman to study the park shelter, and help develop a master plan to bring the park back to life. In December 2022, Niles Township demolished the building and disposed of all hazards and debris.

The park is approximately 33 acres in size with Brandywine Creek running through it. The township will look at adding the new shelter and connecting it to the current Indian-Michigan River Valley Trail that runs along 3rd Street.

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Niles Township Board of Trustees members and other community leaders gathered Friday, April 18 for a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the construction of upgrades at Community Park.

Cole-Crocker elected second VP of Michigan Townships Association

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BUCHANAN CHARTER TOWNSHIP – Buchanan Charter Township Supervisor Malinda Cole-Crocker has been elected second vice president of the Michigan Townships Association. Cole-Crocker was elected to the position helping to lead Michigan's largest municipal association by her township peers at MTA's 2025 Annual Educational Conference & Expo, held March 31-April in Grand Rapids. MTA represents more than 99 percent of Michigan's 1,240 townships, including more than 6,500 elected township officials and thousands more appointed township officials and personnel. Cole-Crocker first joined the MTA Board of Directors in 2017, and represents MTA District 22, which encompasses Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties. She has been township supervisor since 2014, and its assessor since 2020.

Cole-Crocker

Just as Cole-Crocker takes great pride in being part of a township team that provides resources and guidance to the community and its residents, she is also proud of the resources that MTA provides to its member townships and their leaders. In her leadership role with the Association, she hopes to "confidently accept challenges presented to townships and help provide the knowledge to deal with those challenges, and ensure that MTA continues to be the best resource for all things townships," she said.

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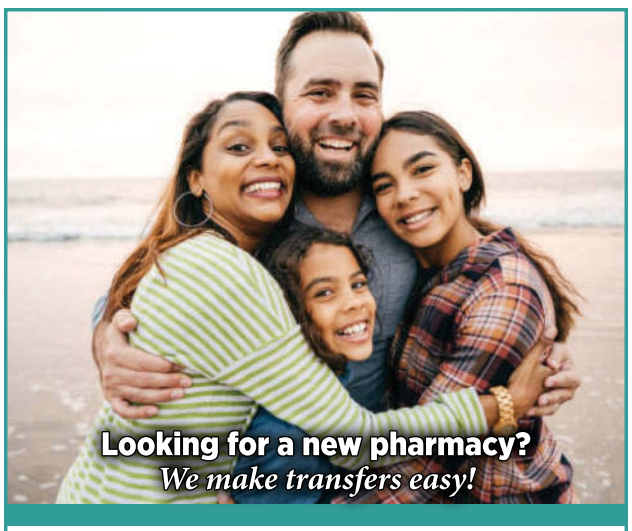

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Notre Dame faculty experts reflect on life, legacy of Pope Francis

COMMUNITY REPORT

PHOTO BY MATT CASHORE | UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Pope Francis shakes hands with University President Rev. Robert A. Dowd, C.S.C. in 2024.

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — On April 21, Pope Francis died at the age of 88. Born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in 1936 in Argentina, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1958, was ordained a Catholic priest in 1969 and became the archbishop of Buenos Aires in 1998. In 2001, Pope John Paul II named him a cardinal. Following the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis was elected as his successor on March 13, 2013.

As the University of Notre Dame joins the Church and the world in mourning Pope Francis' death, the University's faculty experts reflect on his papacy, life and legacy.

"Pope Francis was the first pope from the Global South, now Catholicism's demographic center, and that has been hugely meaningful," said John McGreevy, the Charles and Jill Fischer Provost and Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History. "This is reflected in his focus on the poor — a core theme of Latin American theology since the 1970s — and on migrants and the environment. It is also reflected in his commitment to 'inculturation' of the liturgy and Catholic life into local, often Indigenous cultures."

According to McGreevy, Pope Francis also did more than any predecessor to "diminish the monarchical dimensions of the papacy."

"His informal personal style, the willingness to carry his own luggage and live in Santa Marta, all reflected a caution about the idea of the pope as a prince of sorts," McGreevy said. "He is continuing the legacy of John Paul II and Benedict XVI here, but in a much more pronounced way."

In contemplating Pope Francis' legacy, Rev. Daniel Groody, C.S.C., vice president and associate provost, turned to the pope's own words: "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's Mercy," wrote Pope Francis in Misericordiae Vultus. "These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith."

"Pope Francis has reminded us throughout his life and through his words, gestures and actions that the Gospel message is fundamentally about God's mercy," Father Groody said. "For this reason, he chose as his motto 'Miserando atque eligendo,' which means, 'The Lord looked on him with merciful love and called him.' While alluding to Matthew's call, he makes these words his own when he becomes a priest. This vision has always been at the core of his pastoral work, and it took on a global significance when he was elected pope."

Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical, Laudato si': On Care for Our Common Home, was also "one of the most profound and enduring" gifts he

See POPE, Page A7

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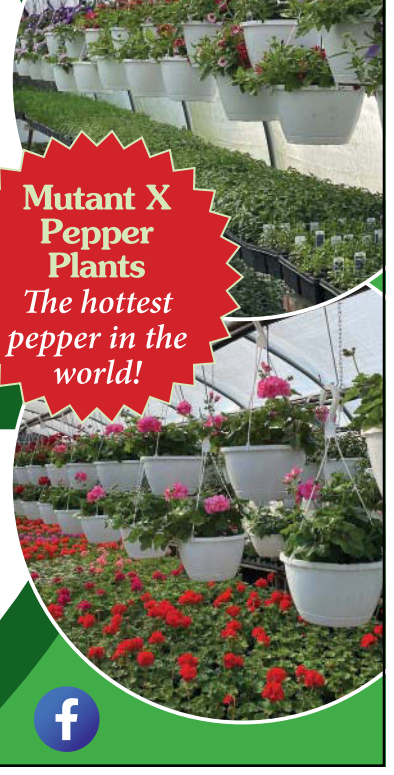

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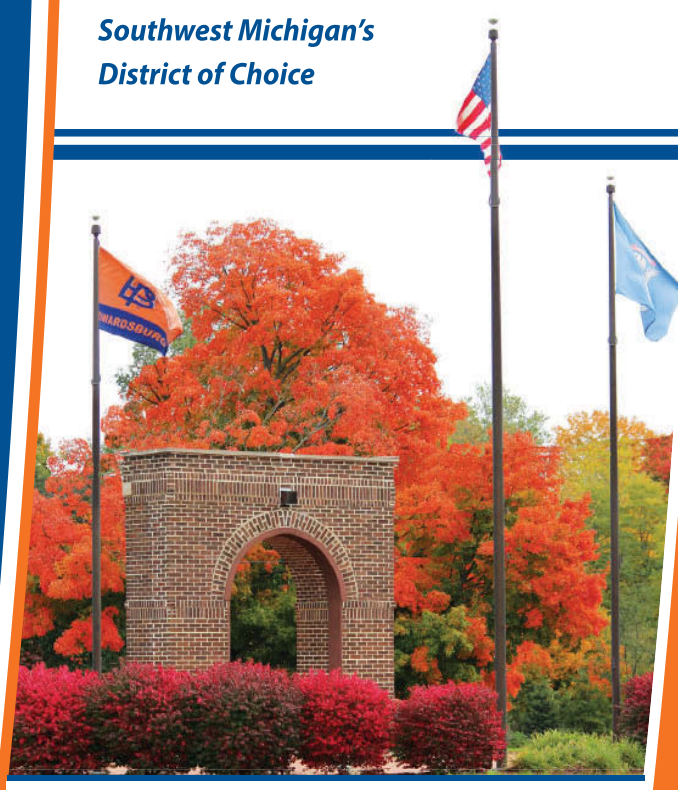

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Fourth Grade	2	Eleventh Grade	2
Fifth Grade	Unlimited	Twelfth Grade	Unlimited
Sixth Grade	Unlimited		

Applications are available and being accepted electronically, April 7 - May 2, 2025, at www.edwardsburgpublicschools.org for any Y5/Kindergarten - 12th grade student living in Cass County and contiguous districts in Berrien, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Please complete a separate application for each student.

For more information, contact Kimberly Slack at 269-663-3055 or kslack@goeddies.com.

Additional spots will be considered as they become available.

Opinion

Measles again?

By RICH CAINS
Publisher, Leader Publications

The United States is currently experiencing a significant measles outbreak, with over 800 confirmed cases reported across 25 states. The outbreak has been particularly severe in Texas, where 624 cases have been confirmed since late January. The majority of cases—97 percent—involve individuals who are either unvaccinated or whose vaccination status is unknown.

The outbreak has led to multiple hospitalizations and three confirmed deaths, including two school-aged children in Texas who were unvaccinated and had no underlying health conditions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified 10 separate outbreaks (defined as three or more related cases), with 94 percent of confirmed cases being outbreak-associated.

Public concern over measles and vaccine misinformation has been growing. A recent KFF* poll found that 33 percent of Americans had encountered false claims suggesting that the measles vaccine is more dangerous than the disease itself—a significant increase from 18 percent last year. Additionally, nearly 30 percent of respondents still believe the unproven claim that the MMR vaccine causes autism.

Cains

Despite the outbreak, vaccination rates remain high overall, but pockets of unvaccinated populations—such as the Mennonite community in Texas—have contributed to the spread. The CDC continues to emphasize that MMR vaccination is the best protection against measles and its complications.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., as the Secretary of Health and Human Services, has been vocal about his stance on the measles outbreak and autism. He has described the rise in autism diagnoses as an "epidemic," attributing it to environmental exposures rather than genetic factors. Kennedy has pledged to dedicate federal research dollars to uncover the causes of autism, aiming to provide answers by September. However, his remarks have sparked controversy, with experts and advocates criticizing his characterization of autism and his dismissal of established research.

Regarding the measles outbreak, Kennedy has shifted his tone on vaccines, encouraging people to take the measles vaccine despite his history of vaccine skepticism. He has called the response to the outbreak "a model for the rest of the world," highlighting efforts to contain the virus. However, his approach has faced backlash, with critics accusing him of downplaying the severity of measles-related deaths and undermining public health efforts.

Kennedy's statements have drawn mixed reactions. While some parents and advocates appreciate his commitment to addressing autism and public health issues, others argue that his rhetoric perpetuates harmful stereotypes and misinformation. Autism advocates have emphasized the need for a more nuanced understanding of autism spectrum disorder, which encompasses a wide range of experiences and abilities.

Kennedy's initiatives, including the "Make America Healthy Again" Commission, aim to tackle various health challenges, from autism to chronic diseases. However, his controversial remarks and policy decisions have raised concerns among public health experts and the autism community.

Kennedy claimed that many children with autism would "never pay taxes, hold a job, play baseball, write a poem, or go on a date," and that some would never use a toilet unassisted. These recent comments have been heavily criticized by autism advocates, researchers, physicians, parents of autistic children as well as adults diagnosed with autism, who argue that his portrayal is both inaccurate and dehumanizing.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a diverse condition, with symptoms and abilities varying widely among individuals. While some people with autism face significant challenges, many lead fulfilling lives, contributing to society in meaningful ways. Kennedy's remarks have been labeled ableist, with critics emphasizing that his statements strip autistic individuals of their humanity. Advocacy groups have pointed out that his focus on environmental causes ignores the need for better support systems and services for people with autism.

Kennedy's comments also reflect his long-standing controversial views on autism and vaccines, despite extensive research debunking any link between the two. His pledge to identify environmental toxins as the cause of autism has been met with skepticism, as experts highlight the complex interplay of genetic, biological, and environmental factors in ASD. The backlash underscores the importance of addressing autism with sensitivity and evidence-based approaches, rather than perpetuating harmful stereotypes.

*KFF states that it is a non-partisan organization focused on health policy. It conducts its own research, polling, journalism, and specialized public health information campaigns. Its website has been praised for having the "most up-to-date and accurate information on health policy" and as a "must-read for healthcare devotees."

NEWS

LMC students visit state capitol

COMMUNITY REPORT

LANSING — Four students from Lake Michigan College hit the legislative halls in Lansing on April 17 to advocate for community college students. The four students on the LMC team were Caia Bowman, Julia Pepple, Jonathon Orlando, and Renato Recillas. They were joined by LMC Provost Dr. Ken Flowers, Vice President of Enrollment, Marketing, and Government Relations Al Pscholka, Jeremy Burleson, Associate Dean, South Haven campus, along with Sarah Thomas of LMC advising and the LMC Mascot Rocky Red Hawk.

Bowman, 19, of Benton Harbor, who graduated from Berrien Springs High School, was a dual enrollment student who will be graduating from LMC next week. She plans to attend Grand Valley State University and major in Pre-Medicine. "I like the idea of networking, and it was great to see the legislative process in action and I enjoyed hearing from our area legislators. They supported the same things we did and were open to a new generation with innovative ideas," Bowman said.

Pscholka, a former state lawmaker and state budget director, said it was important for area legislators to hear directly from students. "We want our students to lead those discussions, to ask questions, and to share their stories. All four of them did an excellent job talking about overcoming barriers, the advantages they had with dual enrollment and Early/Middle College, and why Lake Michigan College was an important part of their journey," Pscholka stated.

Recillas, 18, of Fennville, is an Early/Middle College student getting his associate's degree next week after attending classes on campus for one year. "It was helpful having Mr. Pscholka up there with us. He was connected to many people but allowed us to lead the discussion. I was surprised at how approachable our legislators were, it was easy to connect with them on a number of issues," Recillas stated. The President of the LMC Student Senate, Recillas will attend the University of Michigan next year and major in political science.

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Renato Recillas and Julia Pepple pose for a photo inside the state capitol building.

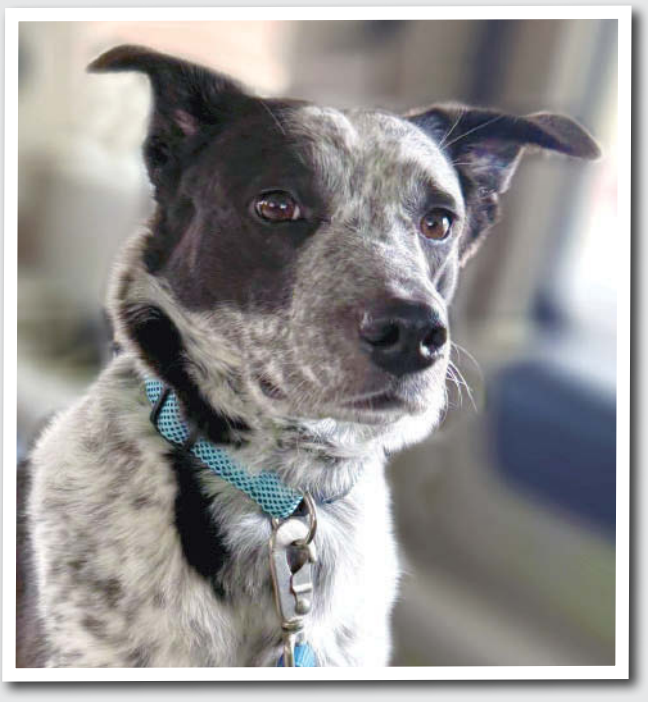
Pepple, 19 and a graduate of Watervliet High School, also took college classes while still in high school. Last year, 30 percent of the student body at Watervliet High was enrolled in at least one college class. She is graduating and planning to attend Grand Valley State and major in Pre-Law with an eye toward working in the legal field, or perhaps the Legislature someday. "Being able to go to our state capitol was a great privilege and an outstanding way to interact with state lawmakers. It was refreshing to know that legislators want to hear from younger people," stated Pepple.

Orlando, 18, of Berrien Springs and another student who took college classes at Berrien Springs High School, took it one step further. "If I was attending a four-year school, I doubt I would have had the opportunity to have the experience I did as a Lake Michigan College student," he explained. "I got to meet a number of Senators and Representatives, attend a committee meeting, see the architecture of the Capitol, and get a better understanding of how state government works," he added. Orlando will return to LMC next Fall and transfer to Central Michigan University the following year. He is the Secretary of the LMC Student Senate.

"Student success is our mission," said Flowers. "Every day, we are working to provide students experiences that will help them in the future, whether that's participating in Michigan Community College Legislative Day, working as an apprentice at a local company, or being part of a student club, we want to connect our students to their future," he said.

PET OF THE WEEK

Our friend this week is **Maverick**, a three-year-old Blue Heeler mix. Volunteers said he loves his stuffed animals and giving hugs. Maverick is great on a leash and loves going for walks. He is ready to meet a loving family. Maverick is neutered and current on shots. Available through Lucky Dog Ranch, contact mike@luckydogranchswm.org.



Area residents get jail time on drug charges

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — Area residents were sentenced to jail Monday in the Berrien County Trial Court at the Niles courthouse.

Francis

Bambi Lin Francis, 42, of Niles, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine and was sentenced to 300 days in jail with credit for two days served and $258 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred Feb. 10 in Niles. Francis is currently on parole from 2022 convictions and prison sentences for possession of cocaine and possession of methamphetamine in Cass County She was released from prison last June.

"I am very sorry, I would like to take full responsibility for all my actions," Francis said. "I am taking classes in jail and will sign myself into rehab when I get out. My parole agent wants me to go to a halfway house. I will do rehab no matter what."

"You have been to prison and jail and been placed on probation," Berrien County Trial Court Judge Gordon

See JAIL, Page A7

Niles Daily Star

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COMICS & PUZZLES

ADAM

OKAY, XYX! I BOUGHT SIX CASES OF YOUR COFFEE! HAPPY?
CAN YOU QUIT TARGETING ME? IT'S CREEPY!
ARE... ARE YOU LISTENING?
THEY'RE IN THE ORANGES!!
THANK YOU, ADAM.

ALLEY OOP

TO COMPLETE OUR QUEST, WE NEED TO FIND A TURNIP. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD START...
GOT IT!
WELL, THAT WAS EASY.
IT WAS GROWING IN BEA'S VEGETABLE PATCH!
BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I'D CALL IT EASY. THAT GOPHER WAS REALLY GIVING ME THE STINK EYE.

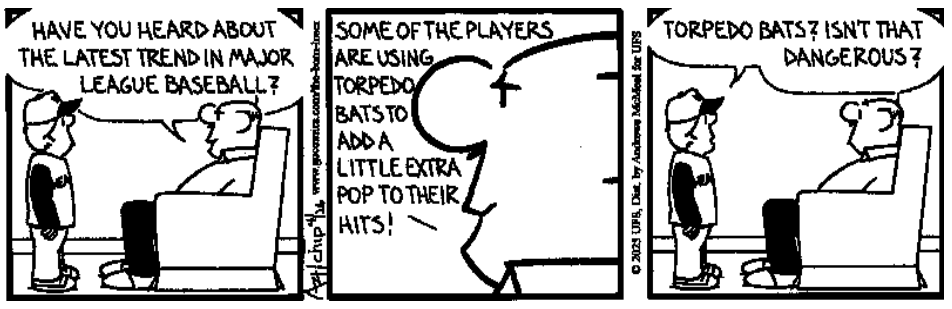
ARLO & JANIS

FINALLY! A BEAUTIFUL SPRING DAY!
THE BIRDS ARE SINGING! THE TREES ARE SO GREEN! THE AIR IS WARM! THE BREEZE IS BALMY!
Johnson
THIS IS THE SEASON WE'D GO SHOPPING FOR YOUR NEW BIKINI!
THE BREEZE ISN'T THE ONLY THING THAT'S BALMY!

BIG NATE

MRS. GODFREY, I'M BACK.
SO I SEE.
I TRUST YOU'RE FEELING BETTER.
YEAH.
GOOD. SIT DOWN AND WRITE A 4-PARAGRAPH ESSAY ON THE BATTLE OF VICKSBURG.
ACTUALLY, I FEEL SICK AGAIN.
NICE TRY.
visit: bignate.com

BORN LOSER

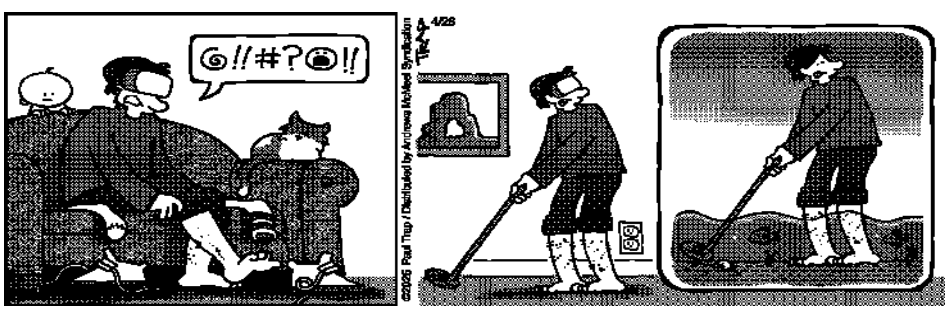

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE LATEST TREND IN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL?
SOME OF THE PLAYERS ARE USING TORPEDO BATS TO ADD A LITTLE EXTRA POP TO THEIR HITS!
TORPEDO BATS? ISN'T THAT DANGEROUS?

FRANK & ERNEST

GRIZZWELLS

JASMINE, I WISH YOU DIDN'T THINK OF ME AS A SHORT, BORING LOSER
HONESTLY, PIERPOINT, I DON'T THINK OF YOU THAT WAY... I THINK OF YOU... NO, WAIT...
...THAT'S EXACTLY HOW I THINK OF YOU!
SIGH. SOMETIMES BEING RIGHT SUCKS

THATABABY



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SODOKU PUZZLE

HOW TO PLAY: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

DIFFICULTY RATING: 5/5

ANSWER ON PAGE 6

				6	8		9	2
				7		1		
2			5	9		3		
		9					3	1
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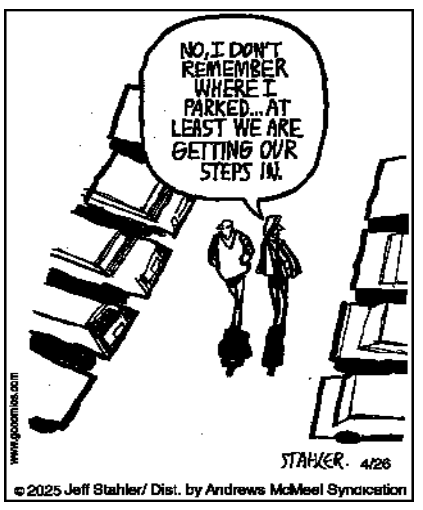
		3		2	5			8
		7		8				
5	9		1	4				

MODERATELY CONFUSED


NO, I DON'T REMEMBER WHERE I PARKED... AT LEAST WE ARE GETTING OUR STEPS IN.
STAHLER. 4/26
© 2025 Jeff Stahler/ Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication

REALITY CHECK

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

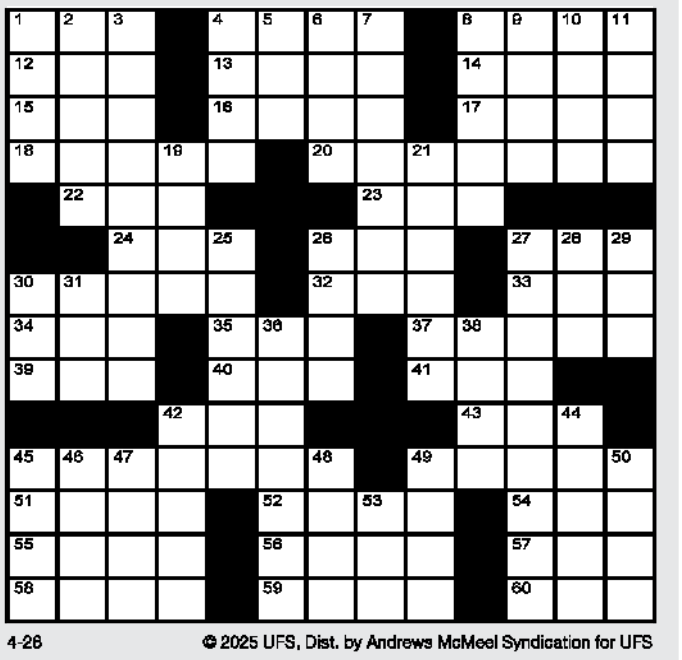
ANSWER ON PAGE 6

ACROSS

1 Breakfast staple
4 "Dream on!"
8 Molt
12 Actor — Kilmer
13 — bene
14 Residence
15 WWII abbreviation
16 Candid
17 Operatic solo
18 Batman's sidekick
20 Green-headed duck
22 Wine type
23 Make lace
24 Kettle contents
26 Piece
27 Common article
30 Wall hanging
32 Expert airman
33 Director — Howard
34 Bovine cry
35 Hatchback
37 Edible mollusk
39 Do something
40 Flow back
41 Wine cask
42 Cuckoo
43 Winter driving hazard
45 Sewing machine foot pedal
49 Delay
51 Frosty coating
52 Up to no good
54 Draw
55 Lhasa —
56 Fiddling despot
57 Letter after zeta
58 New driver, usually
59 If not
60 Hideout

DOWN

1 Perpetually
2 Croc cousin
3 Travel far and wide
4 Soon
5 Soak (up)
6 Bit of news
7 Rabid follower
8 "Thou — not ..."
9 Circle dance
10 Arab VIP
11 "— Poets Society"
19 Thought
21 Most contemporary
25 Go up
26 Pointed remark
27 Cut short
28 — polloi
29 Put the kibosh on
30 Physicians' org.
31 Legendary bird
36 City in Texas
38 Throw in the towel
42 Baseball great Hank —
44 The cream
45 "Amen to —!"
46 Lariat
47 Facilitate
48 Stuntman — Knievel
49 Gin flavoring
50 Spare
53 Tax org.



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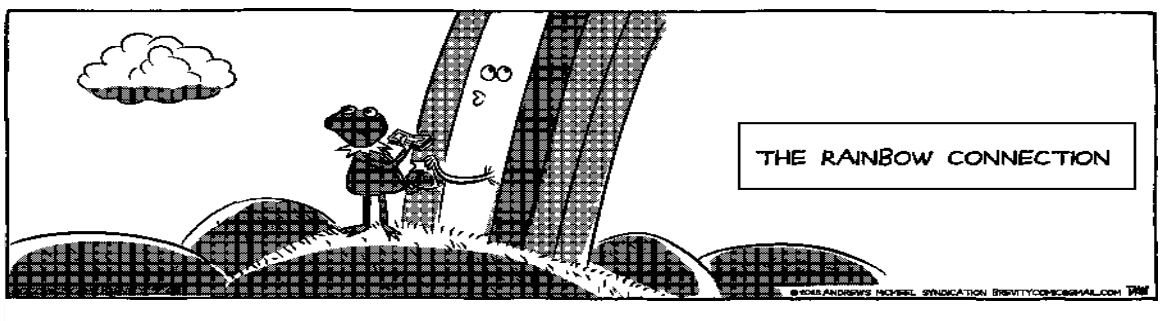
BREVITY



HEART OF THE CITY

THIS FACE WASH FEELS NICE, BUT WHY ISN'T IT WORKING YET?
"SEE RESULTS IN AS LITTLE AS TWO WEEKS!"
NEW! ACNE GONE
I CAN'T BELIEVE I HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS FOR TWO WEEKS!
TECHNICALLY YOU'LL BE DEALING WITH IT FOR THE NEXT FORTY YEARS!
THANKS, MOM!!!

DEATH NOTICES

Christine Cosey, 76, Niles, passed April 16, 2025. Funeral services will be April 24, 2025 at 1:00pm at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church-Niles. Brown Funeral Home in Niles completing arrangements. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Mary Whitney, 98, of Buchanan, passed away Wednesday, April 16, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to Allred Funeral Home. Services on Tuesday, April 22nd at Allred Funeral Home. AllredFuneralHome.com

Christine Kuhn, 79, of Coloma, passed away Wednesday, April 16, 2025. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, of Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Rev Ronald M. Smith, 88, passed away on Thursday, April 17, 2025, in Niles, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Brent James Hagadorn, 58, of Buchanan, Michigan, passed away on April 19, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Marvin Schindler II, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on Tuesday, April 15, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to and provided by Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

George Paquette Jr., 85, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on Friday, April 18, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to and provided by Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services

Fred Stanley Haas Jr., 63, of Benton Harbor, Michigan, passed away on Friday, April 18, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to and provided by Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Dale K. Woods, 92, of Niles, passed away Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at Westwoods of Niles. Arrangements have been entrusted and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Ask Us About Our Pre-Need Plans
PAUL E. MAYHEW FUNERAL HOME, INC.
26863 W. Main Street, Edwardsburg, MI
269-663-5345
Paul E. Mayhew, Owner

EDWARD CORWIN ESTATE
ESTATE AUCTION
SATURDAY - MAY 10 @ 10:30 A.M.
Located at 55796 - 92nd Ave. - Dowagiac, MI
(7 miles North of Dowagiac on M-51 to 92nd Ave. then East or South of Decatur on M-51)
TRACTOR * MOWER: Allis-Chalmers "WD" Row Crop Tractor w/12 Volt & 3-Point; Craftsman 1000 Riding Mower. FARM IMPLEMENTS: 5 Ft. Brush Chopper; 2 Bottom Plow; Pull Disk & Drag. PLOW TRUCK * COLLECTOR CAR: 1965 Ford Shop Modified Plow Truck; 1963 Thunderbird w/390 Motor, Rough Condition. FISH BOAT * TRAILERS: 12 Ft. Sea-King Aluminum Fishing Boat; Shop Made 6' X 14' Tandem Axle Trailer; Single Axle Trailer. GARAGE ITEMS * TOOLS: Large Band Saw; Torch Set w/Cart; (2) Portable Air Compressors; Stick Welder; #18 Round Oak Stove; Old Jacks; Small Forge; Old Motors; Hunting Items; Shop Tools. FURNITURE * COLLECTIBLES: 3 Piece Bedroom Set; 3 Cushion Sofa; Chest of Drawers; Cast Iron Toys; Porch Swing. BLACK POWDER RELATED: Black Powder Pistols; Black Powder Rifles; Black Powder Double Barrel Guns; Black Powder Accessories.
GLASSMAN AUCTION SERVICE
WEB: glassmanauctions.com - auctionzip.com - gotoauction.com
John Glassman (269) 757-3315

BETTY HEIMBERGER

A Celebration of Life for Betty Heimberger will be held on May 3rd at 1 PM at Hope community Church, 2390 Lake St. in Niles Michigan. There will be a luncheon following. We welcome everyone who knew and loved Betty to come share with family and friends!

OBITUARIES

Anthony B McCabe

August 1, 1965 - March 18, 2025

Anthony Bruce McCabe, 59, died Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

His life began August 1, 1965 born to Ronnie McCabe and Virginia Hanson in St. Joseph, Michigan.

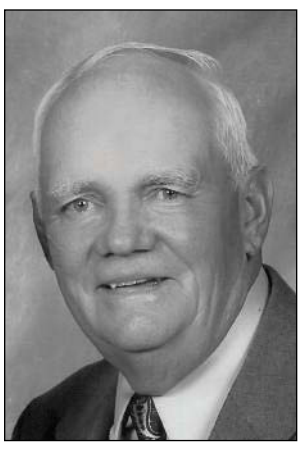
Tony enjoyed watching football, especially University of Michigan. He was aficionado of spicy foods. If it didn't come spicy, he added it in. Tony loved to be outdoors, sitting by the river and fishing with his family.

Anthony will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by three sisters, Esther Craft, Kassie McCabe, Karrie McCabe; six nephews, Caleb Cox, Kain Blair, Coby Henslee, Chance Craft, Jace McCabe, Kayl Kibler; one niece, Rayven McCabe and one great nephew, Zyon Duncan.

He was preceded in death by his parents, two sisters, Sherri Bell, Dawn Parker and one brother, Kevin McCabe.

The family will observe a private remembrance.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.



Richard Buss

April 2, 1939 - March 27, 2025

Richard Lee Buss, 85, of Decatur, passed away peacefully on Thursday, March 27, 2025 at Rose Arbor Hospice in Kalamazoo. He was born April 2, 1939 in Lawrence, MI to Elwyn and Mildred (Jacobs) Buss.

The family will celebrate Richard's life with a memorial service at a later date at Decatur New Hope Community Church. A graveside service has been held at Hamilton Cemetery, Decatur. Memorial contributions may be given to Decatur New Hope Community Church. Arrangements entrusted to Newell Chapel, Decatur 269-423-2561. Those wishing to leave an online condolence for the family may do so at www.newellchapel.com.

Richard was a graduate of Lawrence High School, class of 1957. He married Maxine Stam on June 23, 1962. He worked as a foreman for many years at Rudy Manufacturing in Dowagiac, retiring from Modine Manufacturing (formerly Rudy Manufacturing) in 2000. After retirement, he continued to enjoy farming and traveling. He was especially known for his sweet corn. Richard was involved in the Van Buren County Youth Fair, working with the livestock in the 4-H program. He was also a member of Decatur New Hope Community Church.

Richard will be missed by his wife of 62 years, Maxine Buss; his son, David (Suzanne) Buss; his grandchildren, Cayla, Matthew, Elizabeth (Cody), Alexandria (Max), and Benjamin; his great grandchildren, Maddix, Carter, Joseph, Kennedy, Ember, and Tessa; his nieces and nephews, Melvin (Nancy) Wharton, Gordon (Dawn) Wharton, Sharon (Scott) Jenning, Dan (Karen) DeLong, Julia (Dan) Walden, and Linda (Joe) Edwards; his brothers in law, Bob (the late Marilyn) Doroh, and Bob (the late Betty) DeLong; and many extended family members and friends.

He is preceded in death by his son, Mark Buss; his siblings, Robert Buss, and Dorine (Eugene) Wharton; and his parents.

Marcile V. Buck-Williams

March 4, 1943 - April 16, 2025

Marcile Vivian Buck-Williams, 82, died peacefully April 16, 2025 in the comfort of her family's presence.

Her life began March 4, 1943 in Jones, Michigan, the ninth of twelve children born to James Albert Buck and Olive Elizabeth (Wright) Buck.

Marcile was a wonderful stay at home mother to her children and to others in the family and community, always making people feel welcomed to her home and table. She later worked for Progressive Farms, at AT&T, and as a cabinet builder. She attended her family's church, the Church of God in Vandalia, Michigan.

Marcile will be greatly missed by family and friends. She leaves to mourn her passing and continue her legacy her seven children, Trenholm C. Williams, Jr., Cassandra O. Williams-Brown, Lester A. (Anita) Williams, Lonnie K. (Julie) Williams, Rodney S. Williams, Timothy W. Williams, and Stephanie T. Williams. She also leaves to cherish her memory twenty-three grandchildren, Shamika, Karlton, Lester II, James, Monika, Lonnie Jr., Rodney Jr., Taira, Tiffany, Keondra, Brandie, Breanna, Cierra, Whitney, Timothy Jr., Vivian, Brett, Mathew, Jermaine, Reese, Andrew, Timiya, and Aponi; thirty-five great-grandchildren; her brother, Charles Buck; a host of nieces and nephews; and her dear, dear friend, William "Bill" Goins.

She is preceded in death by her parents, James and Olive Buck; her in-laws, Cornelious Sr. and Lena (Kennedy) Williams; one great granddaughter, Taryn Nelson; ten siblings, Otto Buck, Clara Fleming, Dorothy Haines, Franklin Buck, Barbara Wilson, Paul Buck, Ronald Buck, Roger Buck, Larry Buck, and Richard Buck.

Family and friends will gather Saturday, April 26, 2025 from 12 Noon until time of service at 2:00 p.m. in Church of Cassopolis, 520 Pearl Street, Cassopolis. Marcile will be laid to rest in Calvin Center Cemetery, Cassopolis.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Rickey Willis

May 3, 1956 - April 19, 2025

Rickey J. Willis, 68, of Berrien Springs, passed away on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital in St. Joseph, MI.

He was born on May 3, 1956, in Niles, MI.

Surviving are three nieces - Tonya Brooks, Christina Carpenter and Shelby Willis; nephew - Brad Willis; and many extended family members.

Preceding him in death were his parents - Harry and Mary Jane (Bray) Willis; two sisters - Cindy Willis and Kathy Blue; and brother - Michael Willis.

The family would like to send a special thank-you to the Dickinson family for the care they provided Rickey throughout most of his life.

Cremation has taken place and private family services will be held at Mission Hills Memorial Gardens, Niles. Arrangements have been entrusted to Swem Chapel - Stark Family Funeral Homes, Buchanan. Please visit Rickey's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave a condolence to her family at www.swemchapel.com.

Jill Mari Garmire

February 19, 1948 - April 12, 2025

Jill Mari Garmire,77, of Buchanan, died peacefully Saturday, April 12, 2025. Her life began February 19, 1948 in Circleville, Ohio the second of three children born to John and Minnie Steinhauser.

Jill invested her time volunteering at the Buchanan senior center in their community garden and at Trinity Episcopal Church. Jill could often be found watching the food network. She was known for her baking, particularly pies. Jill loved being with her family on holidays, making home-made stuffing for Thanksgiving and making them pizza for Christmas. She enjoyed gardening for many years, growing vegetables for her meals. Jill took delight in going on gambling trips both alone and with friends. Jill will be greatly missed by family and friends.

She is survived by one son, John Carl Garmire of Buchanan; two grandchildren, Jaymi Fuller of Buchanan, Colin Garmire of Buchanan; three great grandchildren, Audrey Hunt, Lorahlyn Albright, Yance Albright; one sister, Jonda (Randy) Baney of Westerville, Ohio; one niece and one nephew. She was preceded in death by her parents; one sister; and her husband, Jeffrey Garmire.

Family and friends will gather for her service Friday, May 2, 2025, 3:00p.m. in Trinity Episcopal Church 9 South Fourth Street, Niles.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Jill be made to Humane Society of Southwest Michigan 5400 South Niles Road, St. Joseph

See OBITUARIES, Page A7

NILES COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
Superintendent's Office
One Tyler Street
Niles, Michigan 49120
269.683.0732
269.684.9532
nilesschools.org

Niles Community Schools is currently accepting applications under Schools of Choice School State Aid Act MCL 388.7105 and MCL 388.7105c for the 2025-26 school year. Applications are being accepted until May 19, 2025, from residents residing in Berrien County or any contiguous intermediate school district. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent. However, the district will consider transportation from an existing bus stop to the school.

An unlimited number of positions are available in grades K through 12.

Schools of Choice applications are available at the Niles Administrative Office at 1 Tyler Street, or by calling (269) 683-0732 ext. 10013. The application form is also available online at www.nilesschools.org, under the "District" tab> How do I?> Apply for Schools of Choice.

CROSSWORD ANSWER
From Page 5

E	G	G		A	S	I	F		S	H	E	D
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H	O	A	R		E	V	I	L		T	I	E
A	P	S	O		N	E	R	O		E	T	A
T	E	E	N		E	L	S	E		D	E	N

SUDOKU ANSWER
From Page 5

7	1	4	3	6	8	5	9	2
9	3	5	4	7	2	1	8	6
2	8	6	5	9	1	3	7	4
8	4	9	7	5	6	2	3	1
6	5	1	2	3	9	8	4	7
3	7	2	8	1	4	9	6	5
4	6	3	9	2	5	7	1	8
1	2	7	6	8	3	4	5	9
5	9	8	1	4	7	6	2	3

JAIL

Continued from page A4

Hosbein said. "Nothing has seemed to work or stick."

Francis said that while she's been to rehab twice before, this time will be different because she's hit "rock bottom" and has nothing left.

"I don't take any pleasure in sentencing you to jail," the judge said. "I don't know if it will do any good but it's the only thing I can do to give you 10 months of sobriety. I hope at some point you will change your life. It's a hard thing and a dirty cycle."

> "I don't take any pleasure in sentencing you to jail. I don't know if it will do any good but it's the only thing I can do to give you 10 months of sobriety. I hope at some point you will change your life. It's a hard thing and a dirty cycle."
>
> — **Judge Gordon Hosbein**

Austin Alfred Zavaral, 28, of Niles, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine and was sentenced to 270 days in jail with credit for 67 days served and $198 in fines and costs.

Zavarol

The incident occurred Nov. 26, 2024 in Niles Township.

Zavaral admitted he is an addict and said he wants to change his life and be a productive member of society.

Kevin Paul Taggert, 57, of Dowagiac, pleaded guilty to retention of a financial transaction device and was sentenced to two years probation, 250 days in jail with credit for 44 days served, $598 in fines and costs and $9,878,20 in restitution.

Taggart

The incident occurred Sept. 22, 2022 in Buchanan Township.

Defense attorney Nicholas Hogue said Taggert wants to turn his life around and make restitution to the victim.

Anthony Christopher Thomas, 21, of Terre Haute, Ind., pleaded guilty to carrying a concealed weapon and unlawful use of a motor vehicle and was sentenced to two concurrent 270 day jail terms with credit for 10 days served and $326 in fines and costs.

Thomas

The incident occurred Dec. 19, 2024 in Buchanan Township. Defense attorney Richard Sammis said Thomas came to Michigan to buy marijuana and had guns in his car. While he is working now, he has a juvenile record from when his brother involved him in an armed robbery incident.

Rachel Faith Gargano, 23, of Niles, pleaded guilty to larceny in a building and was sentenced to credit for 67 days served and $658 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred Sept. 20, 2018 in Bertrand Township when she stole jewelry from her grandmother.

Gargano

Defense attorney Dan French noted that the incident occurred over six years ago and hasn't been in trouble since then.

Dontae Lavon Murphy, 44, of Niles, pleaded guilty to attempted carrying a concealed weapon and was sentenced to $658 in fines and costs and forfeiture of his weapon.

The incident occurred Nov. 18, 2024 in Niles Township.

POPE

Continued from page A3

gave to the Church and the world, said R. Scott Appleby, the Keough-Hesburgh Professor of Global Affairs at Notre Dame's Keough School of Global Affairs.

"The letter's exhortation to transform our relationship to nature and to one another by 'heeding the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor' is a clarion call to end wasteful habits and selfish practices that exploit our planet's resources and leave the poor to pick up the tab," Appleby said.

Appleby said the pope's words inspire Notre Dame's work in poverty, peace, sustainability and environmental justice — all of which are key elements of the Keough School's strategic focus. Those important pillars, as well as the University's new initiative on a just transformation to a sustainable environment, are "directly inspired by Laudato si' and by the teaching and example of Pope Francis," he said.

Kathleen Sprows Cummings, a professor of American studies and history, concurred, saying, "For evidence of the impact Pope Francis has had on the global Church, we have to look no further than our own University.

"The late pope's priorities have shaped Notre Dame's strategic initiatives in profound ways," she added. "Through its commitments to alleviating poverty and fostering health and well-being, Notre Dame has joined Pope Francis as a champion of human flourishing, especially within vulnerable populations. It would be impossible to conceptualize research on global Catholicism without reference to the first pope from the Americas, and what his life and legacy teach us about the church in the Global South."

The bells in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart tolled to mourn the death of the Holy Father at 9 a.m. EDT today (Apr. 21). The doors have been draped in black bunting, and a photo of Pope Francis has been placed in the sanctuary.

TALKS

Continued from page A1

A Public Hearing Regarding Special Assessments, required in order to give residents a chance for feedback before applying unpaid water and refuse assessments to tax bills. The public hearing will take place at 6:15pm on Monday, May 19th at the village hall.

The next regular village council meeting will take place at 6 p.m. Monday, May 19.

OBITUARIES

Continued from page A6

Michigan.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritter-wickens.com.

Betty Heimberger

A Celebration of Life for Betty Heimberger will be held on May 3rd at 1 PM at Hope Community Church, 2390 Lake St. in Niles Michigan. There will be a luncheon following. We welcome everyone who knew and loved Betty to come share with family and friends!

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WEDDING

Continued from page A1

for us."

Samantha recently underwent emergency brain surgery and received a diagnosis of glioblastoma. One of the most aggressive and lethal brain cancers, glioblastoma has a five-year survival rate of only 6.9 percent, according to the National Brain Tumor Society.

In light of everything, Brant decided to propose. Sam accepted and Brant reached out to Edwardsburg Superintendent Dr. Courtney Szucs for help planning the wedding.

"He said, 'I think I'm gonna ask her to marry, marry me, can you guys help us with the wedding," Szucs said. "We went to [Primary School Principal] Tracy Spalding, and Tracy said well, we're both ordained and then we can do it here [on campus], and we started to put it together."

In less than two weeks, Szucs and Spaulding moved quickly to pull together and plan a ceremony, reaching out to teachers, staff members, parents and business owners in the community. The Morris Inn, 1399 N. Notre Dame Ave., gave the couple a suite for their wedding night, Divine Dough Co. provided donuts for the reception, Alexis Nichole Photography provided photography and Country Florist provided the bouquet and boutonniere. Staff, families and community members donated items and funds which have paid for the dress, rings, photo album and more.

> "It's an example of the extraordinary things people will do for one another, even in the face of a tough situation. In a time where we don't always get to hear the uplifting stories it has been so awesome to see our community come together for these two awesome people."
>
> — **Samantha Byerly**

"I think that this is something the community would want to get involved with," Szucs said. "It was amazing to see everybody come together and yeah just really care about each other. … They all had stories about their kids and how Brant and Sam impacted their kids' lives," Szucs said. "We had community members who were like, 'I've never met them, but I want to help.' Being an Eddie is awesome."

Samantha and Brant met in January 2016 at Maplecrest Country Club, where Samantha was head chef and Brant her sous chef. Working side by side, they quickly became friends, building not just a minute, but a connection. They've traveled together to Florida, Chicago, the Smoky Mountains, and beyond. From hikes to musical festivals, flea markets to Netflix nights, they built a life full of adventure, laughter and genuine companionship. Approximately three years ago, the couple began working in the EPS custodial department where they made a positive impact on students and staff alike.

Brant was recognized by the district as the January recipient and Support Staff Team Member of the Month, chosen for his positive impact on students beyond his custodial duties.

"He's working with kids with all sorts of different social skills," Szucs said. "He takes them under his wing. He just is a true part of the whole Primary community."

Samantha and Brant were overwhelmed by the support they have received from their community.

"It's pretty eye-opening and inspirational," Brant said.

"We haven't been working here that long, so the amount of support that is rolled in from our work family is absolutely wonderful," Samantha added. "It's something that we never saw coming throughout this entire situation. Even with all my medical problems and everything, they've just been so helpful."

For Szucs and the greater Edwardsburg community, coming together to support Sam and Brant on their journey is what being an Eddie is all about.

"It's an example of the extraordinary things people will do for one another, even in the face of a tough situation," she said. "In a time where we don't always get to hear the uplifting stories it has been so awesome to see our community come together for these two awesome people."

ALLOW

Continued from page A1

"We've been working at it since the election last November when the people asked for allowing adult-use recreational marijuana in the Township," said Supervisor Marge Durm-Hiatt. "It failed three years ago and it came back up last year and passed and we've been working on the ordinance ever since then. We've been working with the zoning and planning commissions to protect the township as much as possible."

The amended zoning ordinance removed the requirement for establishments to have cameras installed with automated license plate recognition capabilities. After lengthy discussions with Berrien County Sheriff Chuck Heit, the township determined the requirement was not necessary because the county has installed cameras as with automated license plate recognition capabilities along the highway.

"He's been very involved with it in New Buffalo Township because they have the same thing in a state line issue and they're swamped up here," she said. "He's given us a lot of advice, and I'm very confident that it'll be regulated, and the state has so many more protocols than we do. Dispensaries have to have inside cameras and they have to allow the state to tap into those and so they can drop in anytime they want and see what's going on inside the district. There's a lot of controls, I hope it works well."

The marijuana establishment ordinance states that the township has now opted in to allowing for recreational marijuana establishments and requires that all recreational marihuana establishments follow all state regulations as well as local rules and regulations. It also establishes the parameters for the permitting process and calls for the establishment of licensing fees and limitations on the number of licenses.

The application fee will be set at $5,000 for each requested license for a recreational (adult use) Marijuana establishment within the Township.

There will be three types of marijuana establishments available:

- An unlimited number of retailers
- One secure transporter establishment
- One safety compliance facility

The following would not be authorized and would not operate within the boundaries and jurisdiction of the township:

- Growers
- Processors
- Microbusinesses
- Event Organizers
- Temporary marijuana events
- Consumption establishments
- Excess grower licenses

Cannabis concerns

Township officials voted unanimously in May 2019 to opt out of the recreational marijuana business. In 2022, Voters turned down a proposal that would have allowed marijuana establishments in Niles Charter Township limits before approving a proposal in November 2024.

Dozens of community members attended the meeting Monday night, with some questioning the allowance of unlimited establishments as well as concerns regarding establishments potentially being located in proximity to the Lighthouse Autism Center, 2753 S 11th St. According to Durm-Hiatt, the center is not considered a public or private school in the building's zoning, so distance requirements do not apply.

"The board has looked at all of this for the last six months. We didn't go into it lately at all," Durm-Hiatt said.

While the ballot language stated that the township had to allow a minimum of four establishments, Durm-Hiatt said the board determined that putting a cap on the number of establishments would allow the township to avoid legal pitfalls.

After Consulting with our attorney, he said if you limited it [to four], you could have lawsuits either way," she said. "If we have 10 or 20 people apply, who gets the four? So we decide to go unlimited and let the dispensaries fight it out."

Some community members questioned the restriction of establishments to the space between the Indiana-Michigan border and Fulkerson Road. While she expects the township will receive several applications, Durm-Hiatt said she did not believe the number of dispensaries that eventually open in the township will be an issue.

"There are only so many available properties to be perfectly honest. That's a mile-and a-half," she said. "I think we're going to see maybe five, and that's truly my personal guess – they're just going to weed themselves out because [dispensary owners] know they're saturated also. I don't think we're gonna see a lot of them."

Durm-Hiatt and the board of trustees believe that the township can now move clearly and directly through the establishment of reasonable, effective recreational marijuana business regulations that are consistent and compliant with state law. Over the last six months, the board of trustees considered a series of actions to establish the framework to allow for recreational marijuana businesses in Niles Township.

"Everybody talks about Buchanan and Buchanan is so compact downtown – it's very disruptive to the people there," Durm-Hiatt said. "This is on a highway. People are going to be going by 55 miles an hour or faster. They're going to be coming up from Indiana and going back; people in Niles are still going to go to the Niles ones. I hope it doesn't affect it in a negative way."

The City of Niles, Buchanan, Cassopolis, Dowagiac, Edwardsburg, Berrien County and Cass County were among the 302 municipalities statewide that received payments from the marijuana Regulation Fund in March. Each eligible municipality and county received more than $58,200 for every licensed retail store and microbusiness located within its jurisdiction.

For the 2024 state fiscal year, there was more than $331 million available for distribution from the Marihuana Regulation Fund.

The distribution breakdown for local municipalities and counties is as follows:

- Buchanan: Number of licenses – six; city distributions – $349,371.96
- Cassopolis: Licenses – two; village distributions – $116,457.32
- Dowagiac: Licenses – two; city distributions – $116,457.32
- Edwardsburg: Licenses – two; village distributions – $116,457.32
- City of Niles: Licenses – seven; city distributions – $407,600.62
- Berrien County: Licenses – 27; county distributions – $1,572,173.82
- Cass County: Licenses – 8; county distributions – 465,829.28

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BASKETBALL

Niles grad Haase returns to coach basketball at alma mater

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A familiar face will patrol the sidelines for the Niles High School boys basketball team this winter.

Mark Haase was introduced last week as the new Niles boys basketball coach. A 1996 Niles graduate, Haase has compiled a 196-162 record over 17 seasons of varsity coaching, which has included stops at Otsego, Berrien Springs, Kalamazoo Hackett and Paw Paw.

Haase takes over for Myles Busby, who resigned after compiling a 53-42 record in four years as head coach, which included a district championship in 2023 – the team's first since 2012.

Last week, Haase sat down with junior Trenton Scott and English and Media Productions teacher Dustin Cornelius for an episode of The Viking Huddle, a podcast produced by students in Cornelius' media production class.

Haase last coached varsity basketball with Paw Paw in 2020, citing the desire to spend time with and support his daughter, who was an athlete at Paw Paw at the time. With his daughter having graduated, Haase thought the time was right to return to coaching. When the Niles job became open, the opportunity to return home was too good to pass up.

"I was pretty proud to be honest with you," Haase told Scott and Cornelius. "This is where I want to be. I was born and raised here. My dad was born and raised here, my dad went to school here, my mom still lives here. It's home – I haven't been in this building in 30 years but it is still home and always will be home.... Not many people get this opportunity to be the varsity coach at the school that you went to. To some people, it might not matter but to me

See COACH, Page B2

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Mark Haase.

WRESTLING

Mazzy Lambert Joins SMC wrestling

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Mazzy Lambert of White Pigeon High School has signed his NJCAA Letter of Intent to wrestle for Coach Todd Hesson and the Roadrunners.

Lambert has had an impressive high school wrestling career, with 199 wins against 22 losses, going 56-4 in his senior year. He is a three-time state qualifier, four-time conference champion, two-time district champion, a regional champion and three-time state placer.

Lambert joins Jayden Cochran of Miamisburg, Ohio, as the second signee in the 2025 SMC Wrestling recruiting class.

Coach Tullos from White Pigeon said, "Mazzy has a love for the sport and has been on the mat since he was 4! He knows how to win matches, you can never count him out regardless of the score. Mazzy possesses something rare…True Grit."

Hesson added, "Mazzy is a hard worker! He loves to be on the mat and brings a lot of experience to SMC."

In 2024-2025, the Roadrunners again went undefeated in the MCCAA Duals Meet, earned the threepeat in the MCCAA Conference championship, defeated three nationally-ranked teams to win the Great Lakes District and qualify the maximum ten wrestlers for the national meet. SMC finished the season at #14 in the country and sophomores Colby Klinger and Nathan Andrina were honored as All-Americans.

On April 9, the college announced the construction of a new 11,195 square-foot wing of the Zollar Building that will quadruple the space available to the men's and women's wrestling teams. It will double the mat capacity for practice sessions and provide additional competition space for hosting conference and regional meets. The new facility will also include a dedicated fitness and warm-up area, coaches' offices, locker rooms and additional restrooms. On-site work has already begun, with a groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for May 2025 and occupancy targeted for February 2026.

SOCCER

SCOTT HASSINGER | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Edwardsburg's Kennedy Goorhouse (4) brings the ball upfield through Three Rivers defenders Emerie Dokie (5) and Makhira Myers (13) in the first half Monday.

Edwardsburg girls soccer falls 4-0 at Three Rivers

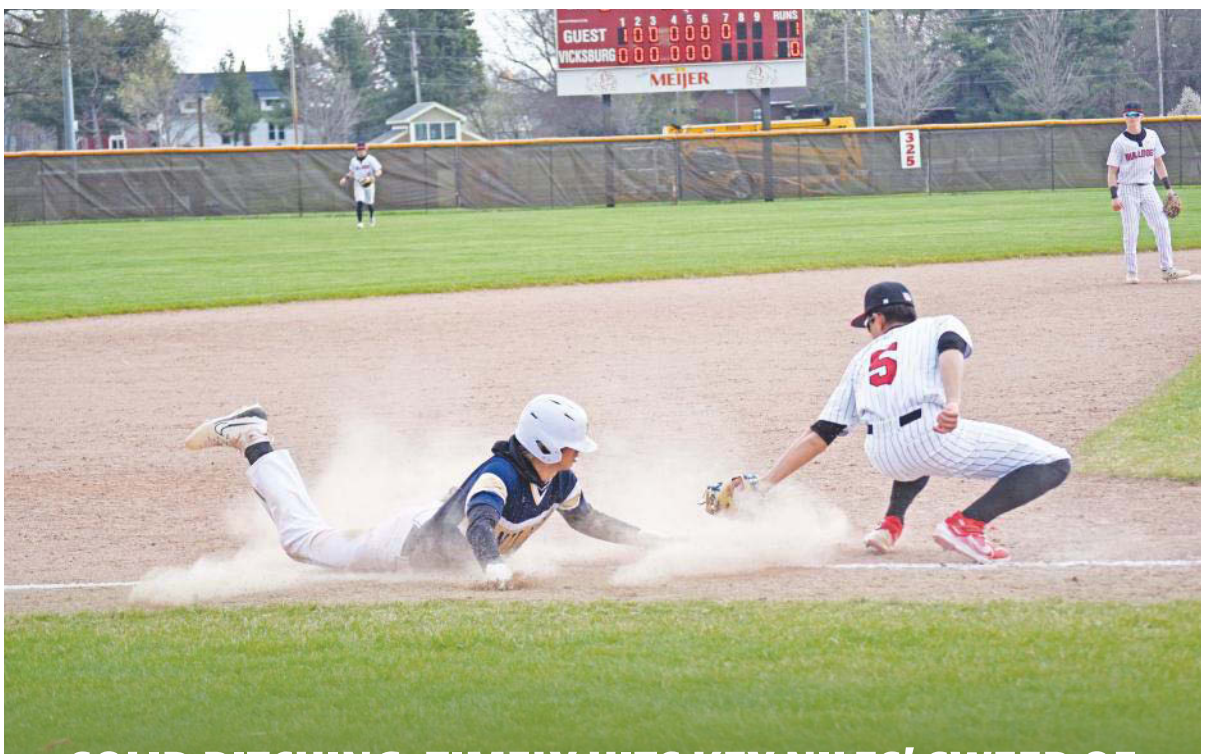
By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Publications Contributor

THREE RIVERS – The 2025 season continues to be one of growth and rebuilding for the Edwardsburg girls' soccer team.

Sean Jesse's Lady Eddies faced one of the more experienced teams in the Wolverine Conference Monday

See SOCCER, Page B2

BASEBALL



SOLID PITCHING, TIMELY HITS KEY NILES' SWEEP OF HOST VICKSBURG

By Scott Hassinger
Leader Publications Contributor

Niles grabbed a quick 1-0 lead in the opener after Sam Rucker singled to lead off the game and later scored on Acie Kirtdoll's fielder's choice.

VICKSBURG – One season after sharing the Wolverine Conference title, the Niles baseball team came out and took care of business Tuesday by sweeping co-defending champ Vicksburg 4-1 and 10-1.

The pair of road wins improves Jim Brawley's Vikings, No. 13 in the latest Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association's Division 2 state poll, to 9-1 overall and 4-1 in the conference. Vicksburg, now 2-9 overall, remains winless in the league at 0-3.

"We are very fortunate to come up here and earn a doubleheader sweep. Vicksburg has a great team and program. I think there were only a total of seven hits between both teams in the first game. Their starting pitcher was unbelievable for them (Vicksburg) in the first game," Brawley said.

Niles grabbed a quick 1-0 lead in the opener after Sam Rucker singled to lead off the game and later scored on Acie Kirtdoll's fielder's choice.

It would be the lone run scored in the contest until the final frame.

The Vikings added three insurance runs in the top of the seventh inning. Junior Brenden Olsen, Niles' starting first baseman and leading hitter with a .464 average and five home runs, belted a triple to deep right field scoring Ryne Brown, Rucker and Braylon Schultz.

Olsen also collected a pair of singles while Rucker, Brody Lace and Schultz all added base hits for the Vikings.

"Brenden is seeing the ball very well for us so far this season," Brawley said.

"That seventh inning was something that was very special to us. Our No. 2 hitter (Schultz) bunted just to get our No. 3 hitter (Olsen) up to the plate in that situation. That inning would've been much different if he (Olsen) hadn't got that hit. Both pithers got a little tired in that last inning but Jaxen (Racht) settled in and got the job done for us. I'm very proud of him and all our kids," Brawley said.

Maguire Bowles scored Vicksburg's lone run in the bottom of the seventh when he came home on a bases loaded walk to teammate John Rose.

Niles junior ace Jaxen Racht went the distance in the victory allowing just two hits with five strikeouts.

"Jaxen works his tail off and has some schools interested in him but we get him another year. He has a real high work ethic, is always in the weight room and doing extra work after practice and really wants to be good at this game," Brawley said.

Brady Young pitched well in the loss for Vicksburg. Young tossed a complete game allowing six hits with three walks and 11 strikeouts.

Niles led game two 1-0 after half an inning. Schultz laced a one-out single and later scored on a wild pitch.

The Vikings added four more runs in the top of the third for a 4-0 advantage. Schultz doubled and later scored on another wild pitch. Olsen singled and scored on fielder's choice by Dane Asmus. Brown and Bryce Zache added RBI singles in the frame for Niles.

Braylin Vallier doubled and scored Vicksburg's lone run in the bottom of the third on Bowles' fielder's choice.

Niles added single runs in the fourth and fifth innings.

Rucker singled to lead off the Vikings' fourth and he scored on Kirtdoll's RBI single.

In Niles' half of the fifth, Tanner Rachels singled for the Vikings, stole second, went to third on a passed ball and ended up scoring after Zache beat out a fielder's choice throw over at first.

Niles addded three runs in the seventh. Brown singled and scored on a balk by Vicksburg's Caden Chisholm. Lace scored on Zache's RBI single. Zache scored on on Olsen's RBI single.

Zache went 3-for-4 at the

See HOST, Page B2

SCOTT HASSINGER | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Niles junior baserunner and starting first baseman Brenden Olsen slides safely into third base ahead of the tag by Vicksburg third baseman Maddox Rosalin in the first game Tuesday.

SOCCER

Continued from page B1

night at Three Rivers and fell to their hosts 4-0.

The loss drops Edwardsburg to 1-7 overall and 0-2 in conference matches. It also marked the fifth time this spring that the Eddies have been shutout in a match by its opponent. All seven of Edwardsburg's losses have come against schools with a winning record.

"Three Rivers is a good soccer team and they relied a great deal on the counter attack tonight. They have two real speedy forwards and we just didn't handle that speed and they played well over the top. We are a team that tries to play good quality soccer and knock the ball around and at times we were able to do that," Jesse said.

"We are a young group that just isn't a polished team yet. We graduated seven starters from last season. We are going through some growing pains but these kids continue to get better every day. I thought we controled the play for a majority of the match. Right now we just lack that ability to finish when we have ppportunities to score."

Sophomore miofielder Natalie McGahan scored twice for Three Rivers (4-3-2) in the first half at 37:32 and 31:18 and Paige McDonald, a senior midfielder, added the Lady Cats' next goal (22:45) to put the hosts ahead 3-0 after the first half.

Senior forward Tori Thorbjorsen scored the final goal for Three Rivers at the 32:23 mark of the second half.

Rebekah Beachey, a senior, recorded the shutout in goal for Three Rivers with 12 saves.

Despite being shutout, Edwardsburg did manage to outshoot Three Rivers 12-10.

Freshman Bailey Maurer came up with six saves in goal for Edwardsburg. Maurer was filling in for the Lady Eddies No. 1 goalie Mallory Schrock who is currently injured and the team's No. 2 goalie was sick.

"Bailey is actually our No. 3 goalie. I thought she stepped in today and did an excellent job for us. She just lacks experience," Jesse said.

Edwardsburg showed vast improvement during the second half after a slow start at the offensive end during the initial 40 minutes of play.

Behind the play of senior center midfielder Alexandria Ferguson and sophomore Kennedy Goorhouse and junior Jada Gaideski at the outside midfielder positions, Edwardsburg had several opportunities to put the ball into Three Rivers' net in the final half.

Sophomore Sophia Kuntz missed a penalty kick for Edwardsburg with 17:04 remaining in the match.

Three Rivers also had one other chance to score on McDonald's penalty kick with 8:16 left but her shot hit the crossbar.

Three Rivers had five corner kicks to just one for Edwardsburg. The Lady Eddies did have two indirect kicks to none for the Lady Cats.

Edwardsburg visits Otsego Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. for another league match.

SCOTT HASSINGER | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Jada Gaideski (5) from Edwardsburg controls the ball as she brings it downfield.

BASKETBALL

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Forrest commits to D2 Barry

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A former Niles basketball standout has found his new collegiate home.

Mikel Forrest has committed to play basketball for Division II Barry University in Miami, Florida. A 2020 graduate of Niles High School, Forrest played for Southwestern Michigan College from 2022-24 and averaged 8.8 points per game in 52 games with the Roadrunners. He totaled a career-high 28 points in a win over Olive-Harvey College and helped the Roadrunners qualify for the National Junior College Athletic Association Tournament in 2023, the first year of the program's reboot after a 26-year athletics hiatus. His efforts earned MCCAA All-Western Conference Honorable Mention status in 2023.

HOST

Continued from page B1

plate in the second game for Niles. Olsen and Kirtdoll added three hits apiece. Schultz added a double and Brown singled twice.

"Bryce had some great at bats for us in that second game. He's had a great season so far as our No. 9 hitter. The New York Yankees had the Murderer's Row, but we have the Sophomore Row where our last four hitters in the lineup are all sophomores," Brawley said.

Josh McIntyre started and picked up the win on the mound for Niles. McIntyre went three innings allowing one run and two hits, with four walks and two strikeouts.

Brown spun the final four frames to earn a save for the Vikings allowing four hits with a walk and one strikeout.

Rosalin suffered the loss for Vicksburg.

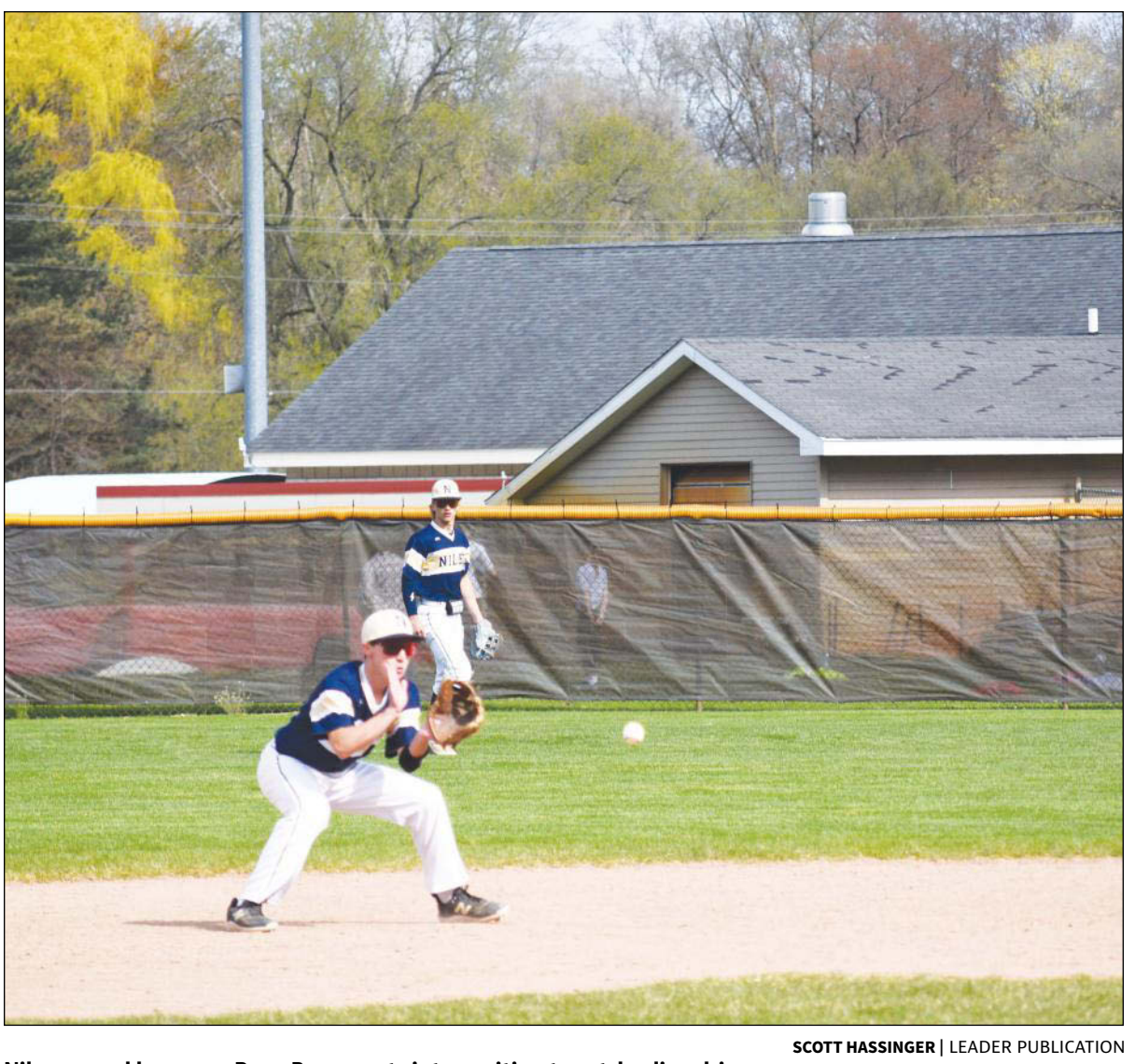
"We have a hard working group of kids we call The Breakfast Club. They get up at 6 a.m. and come in and hit balls before school. You don't see that a lot anymore. This is a dedicated group. I was proud of both our pitchers in the second game and we just made good defensive plays behind them. I like how we are never satisfied and keep adding runs as well. This is a group of good baseball players who really understand the game. If our pitchers and the rest of the team stay healthy we feel like we're as good as any team out there," Brawley said.

Baseball
Game 1

Niles 100 000 3 - 4 6 2
Vicksburg 000 000 1 - 1 2 2
J. Racht (W); Young (L)
Niles hits: B. Olsen 3 (3b), S. Rucker, B. Lace, B. Schultz
Vicksburg hits: Dorscht, Bowles

Game 2

Niles 104 110 3 - 10 16 0
Vicksburg 001 000 0 - 1 6 0
J. McIntyre (W); Rosalin (L)
Niles hits: Schultz, Olsen (3), A. Kirtdoll (3), B. Zache (3), B. Schultz (double), R. Brown (2), S. Rucker. T. Rachels. B. Lace.
Vicksburg hits: B. Vallier 2 (2b), M. Beyer, G. Kubiak, J. Rose, M. Rosalin



SCOTT HASSINGER | LEADER PUBLICATION

Niles second baseman Ryne Brown gets into position to catch a line drive.

COACH

Continued from page B1

it means a lot.

"I'm proud as heck of being given this opportunity. I'm gonna do whatever I possibly can to make this as successful as I possibly can because I owe it to this place because I think that's what people tried to do for me."

As a Vikings athlete, Haase played football, basketball and baseball. He told Scott and Cornelius that fans can expect his teams to be smart, tough and disciplined.

"We want to instill some toughness, not just physical toughness but mental toughness as well," Haase said. "We want guys that Niles can be proud of and that's a basketball team that does it the right way. They're gonna win with class and if we happen to lose we're gonna lose with class. I'm not a big yeller, I'm not a complainer, I'm not a finger pointer and I kind of expect that out of our guys as well. That's not what we're going to be."

Haase said his goal is to make Niles basketball games must-see experiences in the community.

"I think you're going to see a team that's going to play exceptionally hard, a team that is going to play together and a team that hopefully is going to achieve a heck of a lot of success," Haase said. "We want to put an exciting product out there where it's an event to come to the game, it's a raucous atmosphere. Those are the best types of games where it's loud and everyone's standing up the whole game.

"We should be good. We should be really good. The expectations should be high for us. Let's pack this place and make this a destination on a Tuesday or Friday night."

The Niles High School Media Productions class creates content to inform the students of NHS about upcoming events in an entertaining and engaging format. Readers can watch the full interview with Haase on episode 30 of The Viking Huddle on YouTube and are encouraged to subscribe to the Niles High School Media Productions YouTube page.

ND research, athletics address challenges of ACL tears, sleep loss, stress

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Notre Dame Research and Athletics have awarded three research teams the first-ever Human Performance & Wellness Research Grants. The grants will provide funding to support exceptional research projects that contribute meaningfully to fields related to the health, well-being, and performance of human subjects.

Jeffrey F. Rhoads, vice president for research and professor in the Department of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering, said, "Notre Dame Research is proud of our research relationship with Notre Dame Athletics. Through this collaborative partnership, Notre Dame will officially connect the lab to the playing field for the first time ever. We are excited to witness the potential of what it means to marry Notre Dame's research excellence with its long-standing preeminence in Athletics — all for the good of our collective well-being."

"We congratulate the researchers and practitioners who, through these projects, will help athletes train effectively, cope with difficult conditions, and perform safely," said John P. Wagle, the Pat & Jana Eilers Sr. Associate Athletics Director for Sports Performance. "We look forward not just to these results but also to our continued collaboration with Notre Dame Research and the role it will have in fostering high performance and overall well-being, both at Notre Dame and beyond."

The 2025 awardees of the Human Performance & Wellness Research Grant are below.

Helping athletes return after ACL injuries

Edgar Bolívar-Nieto, assistant professor in the Department of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering and Principal Investigator at the Wearable Robotics Laboratory, will lead a project titled "Towards Functional Return-to-Sport Assessment after Anterior-Cruciate-Ligament Reconstruction: A Wearable Framework to Estimate Muscle Strength." He will be joined by co-principal investigator Mandy Merritt, DPT, the senior associate athletic trainer and physical therapist for the Notre Dame Men's Lacrosse Team.

Bolívar-Nieto and Merritt will work to develop an instrumented functional test to help determine when an athlete who has suffered an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury is ready to return to their sport. ACL injuries are common in young athletes. Although ACL surgeries can be effective, about 20% of athletes who experience a torn ACL reinjure the same or opposite knee. Better measures of an athlete's readiness to return will reduce the risk of repeated injury and ensure athletes are able to perform effectively and safely.

Reducing the "sports travel disadvantage"

Gerald Haeffel and Ivan Vargas will lead a project titled "The Sports Travel Disadvantage: Untangling the Effects of Circadian Rhythm Disruption and Sleep Loss on Athletic and Cognitive Performance." Haeffel, an associate professor in the Department of Psychology, leads the Cognition & Emotion Lab, and Vargas, an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology, leads the Sleep and Health Research Lab. Haeffel and Vargas will be joined by co-principal investigators Matthew Robison, an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology, and Carlie McGregor, a staff psychologist in the University Counseling Center and Notre Dame Athletics.

The researchers will explore the "travel disadvantage"—the well-documented phenomenon that teams that travel across multiple time zones before a competition are about 20% less likely to win than teams that do not have to travel. This disadvantage holds true regardless of the direction the team travels or what sport the team plays. By exploring the underlying causes related to sleep and circadian rhythm, the researchers will identify the best ways to intervene and enable teams to compete at their best, even when traveling long distances.

Building stress-resilience in student-athletes

Zhi Zheng, an assistant professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering, will lead a project titled "Smart Textile Sensors for Mental Stress Sensing During Daily Activities." She will work with Yiyu Shi, a professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, and Ying ("Alison") Cheng, a professor in the Department of Psychology and Associate Director of the Lucy Family Institute for Data and Society.

Their project looks at mental stress, a significant challenge for college students as they encounter new academic responsibilities, unfamiliar social dynamics, and heightened expectations. The problem is especially difficult for college athletes, who face the additional pressure of athletic commitments. The research team will develop smart textile sensors to detect mental stress as students go about their daily activities. The textile sensors will detect electrodermal activity. Unlike existing sensors, they will be discreet, integrated into socks and other clothing, and they will use advanced AI computations modeling to overcome the signal challenges that arise due to movement. The researchers' goal is to help students become more aware of stress, improve how they adapt to it, and ultimately support both their performance and mental health.

In addition to the outcomes within the award period, the grants will also serve as seed funding to generate preliminary results for larger, external grants.

To learn more about the ways Notre Dame Research is partnering with Notre Dame Athletics to provide new facilities, infrastructure, and funding to explore the science of elite performance, contact sportsperformance@nd.edu or athleticsresearch-list@nd.edu.

WEEKLY DATA

SOFTBALL

Saturday, April 19
Buchanan 13, Jimtown 3
Jimtown 300 00 – 3 5 1
Buchanan 302 08 – 13 13 1
H. Legault (W); L. Gaugler (L)
2B: (B) C. Weinberg, H. Legault, C. Carlson; (J) K. McPhee, L. Winrott
HR: (B) C. Carlson
Buchanan 11, Kalamazoo Christian 1
KC 010 000 – 1 1 5
Buchanan 101 315 – 11 12 1
C. Horvath (W); C. Ybema (L)
2B: (B) A. Berry
3B: (B) J. Prenkert, M. Ely
Wednesday, April 23
Lakeshore 9, Buchanan 6
Lakeshore 021 6000 – 9 15 3
Buchanan 200 2200 – 6 11 2
L. Dustin (W); H. Legault (L)
2B: (B) C. Carlson, A. Berry; (L) P. Strefling
HR: P. Strefling
Lakeshore 10, Buchanan 6
Lakeshore 210 0205 – 10 15 0
Buchanan 330 0000 – 6 8 1
T. Gosnell (W); C. Horvath (L)
2B: (B) C Weinberg, C Carlson; (L) R. Taylor 2, L. Kerschbaum, L. Dustin

GIRLS TENNIS

s
Monday, April 21
Vicksburg 6, Niles 2,
Singles
No. 1 Scarlett Hosner (V) def. Cheyenne Small (N) 6-1,6-0; No. 2 Maya Grossman (V) def. Donna Babler, Niles, 6-0,6-2; No. 3 - Jenna Schramer (V) def. Ava Daniel (N) 6-0,6-2; No. 4 Elise Howard (V) def. Bella Ladesma (N) 6-1,6-2.
Doubles
No. 1 - Olivia Penney-Emma Vallier (V) def. Hailee Mitchell-Aubrey McIntosh (N) 6-4,4-6,6-2; No. 2 - Emma Williams-Addison VanDalsen (N) def. Hannah Moyer-Madison Kanouse (V) 6-0,6-1; No. 3 Brooklyn Hemminger-Scarlet Thalman (N) def. Jodie White - Morgan White (V) 6-2 , 7-6 (5); No. 4 Erica Centofantic-Sofia Martin (V) def. Kennedy Holloway-Azlynne Ingle, (N) 6-1,6-4.
Brandywine 8, South Haven 0
Singles
No. 1 Ireland Prenkert (B) d. Olivia Emenhiser (S) 6-0,6-1; 2. Sydney Olson (B) d. Asia Cruce (S) 6-1,6-3; 3. Aubree Murray (B) d. Harley Nail (S) 6-1,6-1; 4. Louise Peterson (B) d. Addy Cook (S) 6-0,6-0
Doubles
No. 1 Ashlyn Kohler- Allie Curtis-Lee (B) Evanni Flores-Elena Cavadas (S) 6-0,6-0; 2. Karleigh Byrd-Adeline Gill (B) d. Adeleide Arvizu-GGrace Armendariz 6-0,6-0; 3. Lily Gill-Chelsy Olson (B) d. Sarah Diaz-Salinas-Leah Becker 6-0,6-0; 4. Allison Murray-Holly Anderson (B) d. Mireya Arvizu-Sheyla Gonzalez 6-0,6-0.

Tuesday, April 22
Brandywine 7, Three Rivers 1
Singles
No. 1 Ireland Prenkert (B) d. Jayna Larson (TR) 6-4,6-3; 2. Sydney Olson (B) d. Lily Zabonick (TR) 7-5,6-0; 3. Aubree Murray (B) d. Soreeya Hoeung (TR) 6-0,6-0; 4. Louise Peterson (B) d. Angeleena Ham (TR) 6-0,6-0
Doubles
No. 1 Ashlyn Kohler- Allie Curtis-Lee (B) d. Maggie Gose-Natalie Moore (TR) 6-1,6-2; 2. Karleigh Byrd-Adeline Gill (B) d. McKenna Rydman-Sparklin-Alyssa Jimenez (TR) 6-2,6-2 ; 3. Lily Gill-Chelsy Olson (B) d. Lilah Zabonick-Peyton Bingaman (TR) 6-1,6-1; 4. Aubrey Hearld-Carolyn Johnson (TR) d. Allison Murray-Holly Anderson (B) 7-5,4-6,10-8.
Dowagiac 5, Wyoming Kelloggsville 3
Singles
No. 1 Hailey Spivey (D) def. Angela Aguilar-Vasquez (K), 2-0, 2-0; No. 2 Hayden Hagemann (D) def. Le'Asia Hardiman (K) 2-0, 2-0; No. 3 Olivia Stockwell (D) def. Veda Degroot (K) 6-3,6-3; No. 4 - Kayla Sellman (K) def. Clair Hammond (D) 6-4,6-1.
Doubles
No. 1 Vanessa Garcia-Farias-Yen Phi Nguyen (K) def. Kai Kruger-Kendall Kroepel (D) 6-2,6-4; No. 2 Kylie Lynch-Rylan Miller (D) def. Rebecca Muzamhindo-Genesis Lizardo-Reyes (K) 6-1,7-5; No. 3 Lilyana Cano-Sady Arguinzoni (K) def. Lily Lebeda Chloe Samuel (D) 6-2,6-1; No. 4 Isabella Hertter-Elizabeth Kelly (D) def. Olivia Brown-Serenity Haverson (K) 6-1,6-3.

Wednesday, April 23
Buchanan 8, Dowagiac 0
Singles
No. 1 Kaitlin Ferrell, Buchanan def. Lauren Balsbaugh, Dowagiac ,6-0,6-2; No. 2 - Hana Yamagata, Buchanan def. Hailey Spivey, Dowagiac, 6-0,6-1; No. 3 - Alex Paturalski, Buchanan def. Hayden Hagemann, Dowagiac, 6-0,6-0; No. 4 - Finley Kehoe, Buchanan def. Olivia Stockwell, Dowagiac 6-0,6-0
Doubles
No. 1 Olivia Kutemeier- Laura Sweeney, Buchanan def. Kai Kruger-Kendall Kroepel, Dowagiac ,k, 6-0,6-0; No. 2 Sophia Bachman-Isabella Tibbles, Buchanan def. Kylie Lynch-Makyah West, Dowagiac,6-0,6-0; No. 3 Lillian Wegener-Morgan Weldy, Buchanan def. Chloe Samuel- Lily Lebeda, Dowagiac 6-0,6-0; No. 4 Taylor Sweeney-Madeline Tibbles, Buchanan def. Haley Henry-Riley Todd, Dowagiac 6-0,6-1

Niles 6, Three Rivers 2
Singles
No. 1 Cheyenne Small, Niles def. Jayna Larson, Three Rivers 6-2,6-3; No. 2 Lily Zabonick, Three Rivers def. Donna Babler, Niles, 6-1,6-2; No. 3 Ava Daniel, Niles def. Soreeya Hoeung, Three Rivers, 6-1 7-5; No. 4 Bella Ladesma, Niles def. Angeleena Ham, Three Rivers 7-6 (5),6-2
Doubles
No. 1 Hailee Mitchell- Aubrey McIntosh, Niles def. Natalie Moore-Maggie Gose, Three Rivers, 6-0,6-2; No. 2 Emma Williams-Addison VanDalsen, Niles def. Alyssa Jimenez-McKenna Rydman-Sparklin, Three Rivers, 6-2,6-2; No. 3 Brooklyn Hemminger-Scarlet Thalman, Niles def. Lilah Zabonick- Peyton Bingaman, Three Rivers, 4-6,6-2,6-2 ;
No. 4 - Camryn Johansen, Three Rivers - Aubrey Hearld, Three Rivers def. Norah Rogers, Niles - Kennedy Holloway, Niles, 6-3 , 6-4

BOYS GOLF

Tuesday, April 22
Lakeland Conference Jamboree
At Orchard Hills
Medalist
Ethan Tripp, Berrien Springs – 40
Team scores
Buchanan 195 (TB), Berrien Springs 195, Niles Brandywine 212, Dowagiac 247
Buchanan results – Austin Gregory 46, Jacob Kunt 47, Tyler Frame 50, Dean Wegner 52, Gabe Tompkins 58, Carson Shelton 59
Brandywine results – Brady Schoff 50, Jayden Thomas 51, Nolan Shaffer 55, Davis Lotsbaich 56, Blake Magyar 58, Cody Hoskin 63
Dowagiac results – James Greene 62, Hunter Steinman 70, Cooper Szymczak 73, Keegan Franklin 75, Keagan Monroe 77

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Color Space Gray
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Ram Memory Installed Size 8 GB
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Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

HOWARD CHARTER TOWNSHIP CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

TO: RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF HOWARD CHARTER TOWNSHIP AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a public hearing before the Planning Commission of Howard Charter Township, Cass County, Michigan will be held during a special meeting of the Planning Commission on May 14, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Office, 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles, Michigan to consider the Rezone Request by Wingstem Solar Energy LLC, One South Wacker Drive, Ste 1500 Chicago IL 60606 on behalf of WSF LLC, 12505 Rangeline Rd, Berrien Springs MI 49103 for the consideration of rezoning parcel #14-020-019-007-00 from M-Manufacturing District to AR-Agricultural Residential District, to summarize, accomplish the following:

To bring the property into conformance with its current long-standing use and ensure consistency with neighboring land.

Owner of record: WSF LLC

Parcel number: 14-020-019-007-00

Parcel address: Terminal St, Niles MI 49120

Parcel description: 241 SEC 19 T7S R16W E ½ NW ¼. 80 A

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that you are invited to attend the hearing and to present your opinions or position relative to the subject of this hearing. If you are unable to attend the hearing, you may send a letter stating your opinions or position to the Howard Charter Township Office, 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles, MI 49120, Attention: Zoning Administrator.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the application describing the action or relief being sought and Township Zoning Ordinance #192 is available for public inspection, at the Township Office on regular business days during regular business hours.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Township will provide necessary, reasonable auxiliary aids and services at the hearing to individuals with disabilities upon five (5) days' notice to the Howard Charter Township Clerk of the need for the same. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township by email at dclerkhtwp@comcast.net , in writing, or by calling the Clerk at the Township office at the address and/or phone number provided below.

Published: 04/26/2025
Linda McGregor
Zoning Administrator
1345 Barron Lake Rd
Niles, Michigan 49120
(269) 684-0072

Niles Daily Star:
Apr. 26, 2025
HEARING

Put your ad here
call 269-591-6105.

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF NILES, MICHIGAN INVITATION TO BID PAD MOUNT AIR HANDLER PROJECT

Sealed proposals marked **"PAD MOUNT AIR HANDLER PROJECT"** will be received by the **City of Niles in the Office of the City Clerk, 333 N. Second Street, Ste. 301, Niles, Michigan 49120 until 2:30PM (local time) on Wednesday, May 7th, 2025** at which time and place the proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud for furnishing the City of Niles with the following materials: Pad Mount Air Handler and related components.

The proposal, as well as the specifications for the PAD MOUNT AIR HANDLER PROJECT, is on file and may be examined at the Utilities Department Office, 333 N. Second Street, Niles, Michigan where copies may also be obtained. The proposal and specifications may also be obtained under the Utilities link of the City of Niles website at http://www.nilesmi.org/frequently_requested/bids_and_proposals.php

All bidders are required to sign a Certificate of Non-Discrimination that they will comply with all Federal and State non-discrimination laws and regulations.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive irregularities in proposals and to accept the proposal that, in the opinion of City Council, is most advantageous to the City.

Quotations due by 2:30 P.M. EST., May 7th, 2025.

Questions on this request for proposal may be directed to:
John Simpson
WWsuperintendent@nilesmi.org 269-683-8015 X1210

Niles Daily Star:
Apr. 26, 2025
BIDS

Looking for a home?

Look in our classifieds section and learn of great deals for you and your family.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Self Storage Sale

Please take notice Aloha Storage located at 3001 South 11th Street, Niles, MI, 49120 intends to hold an Auction of storage units in default of payment. The sale will occur at the facility on 5/16/2025 at 12:00 PM. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods, furnishings and garage essentials. Unit #K013; Unit #N211. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice.

Niles Daily Star:
Apr. 26 and May 3, 2025
LNS-3314-2025_04_14

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Self Storage Sale

Please take notice Aloha Storage located at 3001 South 11th Street, Niles, MI, 49120 intends to hold an Auction of storage units in default of payment. The sale will occur at the facility on 5/16/2025 at 12:00 PM. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods, furnishings and garage essentials. Unit #K013; Unit #N211. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice.

Niles Daily Star:
Apr. 26 and May 3, 2025
LNS-3314-2025_04_14

PUBLIC NOTICE

**Howard Township
Cass County, Michigan
Board of Trustees
March 18, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall.

Board Action
Approved Meeting Agenda.
Approved the minutes of the 2/18/2, 2/22/25 and 3/4/25 Board Meetings
Approved the financial report with an ending balance of 1,695,928.92 including a CD
Approved the payment of bills through March 18, 2025
Approved the departmental reports
Approved 2025-2026 annual monthly meeting schedules
Approved the contracts with Siegfried Crandall, PC as the auditor and Berends, Hendricks & Stuit Insurance Agency as the insurance agent, Darr Phillips for ordinance enforcement cleanups, Darr Phillps for ordinance enforcement mowing and Snow Plow. Bauckham, Thall et all for Attorney. Cass Count Sheriff Office for Law Enforcement
Approved the contract renewals for the Building Inspector Adam Dahlgren, Electrical Inspector Ron Bellaire, Plumbing/Mechanical Inspector John Dobberteen, and Miss Dig Inspector Lisa Guyott and Northrup Assessing.
Appointed Chris Corzine as Fire Chief, Chris Korp as Assistant Fire Chief, and Tim Phillips as Captain and Fire Inspector.
Approved the Supervisor, Cass County Sheriff Deputy and Zoning Solutions as ordinance enforcement officer for all ordinances, Zoning Administrator as an enforcement officer for the Zoning Ordinance, and the Fire Department Officers as enforcement officers for burning and fire ordinances
Approved Resolution 2024-007, the Salary Resolution,
Approved Resolution 2025-006, the General Appropriations Act Resolution
Approved the 2025-2026 Holiday Schedules
Approved the proposed 2025-2026 General Fund Budget
Approved the proposed 2025-2026 Ambulance, Street Light, Improvement Capital, Building, New Construction, Sewer, ARPA, Fire Truck and Weed Eradication Funds Budgets
Approved 2025-2026 pay scale
Approved NATS local match $4021.00
Public Comment Public comment occurred
Adjourn the meeting at 7:30pm

Niles Daily Star: Apr. 26, 2025
SYNOPSIS 3.18.25

PUBLIC NOTICE

**Howard Township
Cass County, Michigan
Board of Trustees
April 15, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall.

Board Action
Approved Meeting Agenda.
Approved the minutes of the 3/18/25 Board Meeting
Approved the financial report with an ending balance of 1,930,183.47 including a CD
Approved the payment of bills through April 15, 2025
Approved the departmental reports
Approved Barron Lake Association use of Fire Department.
Public Comment Public comment occurred
Adjourn the meeting at 7:20pm

Niles Daily Star: Apr. 26, 2025
SYNOPSIS 4.15.25

PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWNSHIP OF ONTWA CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN NOTICE OF OBLIGATION TO CUT WEEDS

To: The residents of property owners of the Township of Ontwa, Cass County, Michigan and any other interested persons.

Please Take Notice that in accordance with Michigan Public Act 184 of 1917, as amended, and the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) Section 302.4, effective 1-20-2020, as amended: Premises and exterior property shall be maintained free from weeds or plant growth in excess of EIGHT (8) inches in all zoning districts. Noxious weeds shall be prohibited. Weeds shall be defined as all grasses, annual plants, and vegetation, other than trees or shrubs provided; however, this term shall not include cultivated flowers and gardens.

Notice is Hereby given upon failure of the owner or agent having charge of a property to cut and destroy weeds after service of a notice of violation, they shall be subject to prosecution in accordance with IPMC Section 106.3 and as prescribed by the authority having jurisdiction. Upon failure to comply with the notice of violation, any duly authorized employee of the jurisdiction or contractor hired by the jurisdiction shall be authorized to enter upon the property in violation and cut and destroy the weeds growing thereon, and the costs of such removal shall be paid by the owner or agent responsible for the property. Failure to pay will result in a tax lein against the property.

Please take further notice that as provided in this ordinance, it is the duty of the Ontwa Township Zoning Administrator to notify the owner, giving him/her (10) days to cause the work to be done, If the said owner fails, it shall be the duty of the Zoning Administrator to cause such vegetation to be cut, destroyed, or hauled away. Such cutting obligation shall not apply to fields devoted to growing any small grain food crops such as wheat, corn, oats, barley, rye, or garden vegetables.

Published in accordance with said Public Act and Ordinance by order of the Ontwa Township Board.

Ontwa Township
Tina VanBelle
P O Box 209
Edwardsburg, MI 49112

Niles Daily Star:
Apr. 26, 2025
WEED&GRASS

Legal Notices

LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT COUNTY OF BERRIEN CREDITORS NOTICE FILE NO. 2025-078-DE

ESTATE OF JERI LYNN TAYLOR, Deceased
Date of Birth: August 17, 1946

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including creditors and heirs of the deceased whose address(es) are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The Decedent, JERI LYNN TAYLOR, who lived at 2582 Bartak Street, Niles, Michigan, died February 08, 2025.

Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to JUDITH ZIOL, named personal representative, and to the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031 within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.
April 15, 2025

JUDITH ZIOL
3140 West Baylor Lane
Chandler, AZ 85226-1410

Robert L. Landgraf, Jr. (P23000)
Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120-1310
(269)683-8300

Niles Daily Star: Apr. 26, 2025
EST/TAYLOR, J.

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1 The HughesNet Gen5 service plans are designed to deliver download speeds of 25 Mbps and upload speeds of 3 Mbps, but individual customers may experience different speeds at different times of the day. Speeds and uninterrupted use are not guaranteed and may vary based on a variety of factors including: the configuration of your computer, the number of concurrent users, network or Internet congestion, the capabilities and content of the Websites you are accessing, network management practices as deemed necessary, and other factors. When you connect to the HughesNet service using Wi-Fi, your experience will vary based on your proximity to the Wi-Fi source and the strength of the signal.
2. **Free standard installation** applies to new Lease subscribers only. Not valid with Purchase option. Limited-time offer. Restrictions may apply.
3. Per the "5th, 6th, 7th and 8th FCC Measuring Broadband American Reports." Go to: https://www.hughes.com/who-we-are/resources/press-releases/
- Minimum term required. Monthly service and early termination fees apply. Visit legal.HughesNet.com for details.
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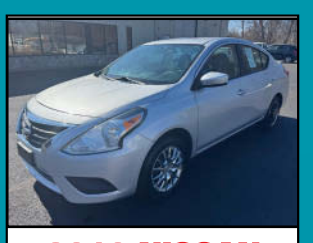

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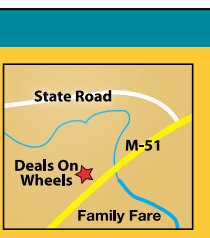

MICHIA
PEOPLE • ENTERTAINMENT • SU

WINES, WARMTH AND COMMUNITY

Solasta Winery Opens in Sawyer, Michigan

BY JUSTIN FLAGEL | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Sawyer, Michigan is home to one of the region's newest wineries with last November's opening of Solasta Winery.

Solasta, which translates to "luminous" or "shining" from Scottish Gaelic, is the long held dream of Rasa Mitkus, a wine lover and graduate of the Lake Michigan College Wine and Viticulture Technology Program.

Rasa's journey to Sawyer started as far away as Lithuania, where she grew up before moving to the United States in her twenties. She spent another 25 years in the Chicago area, earning a Business Management degree from the University of Illinois and leading a career in real estate and mortgage. During that time, a visit to Napa Valley in California ignited a passion for wine.

"It felt right," described Rasa. "It felt like something I wanted to do one day."

It would be years later, after her children had grown and the COVID-19 pandemic changed much of how the world operated, that she was able to fully pursue her wine dream. Enrolling in the Lake Michigan College Center for Wine & Viticulture program in 2020, she learned directly about the wine industry, working in local wineries and vineyards.

Rasa's plan had been, from the start, to open a winery in the Southwestern Michigan area. She had visited with her family for decades, enjoying the beaches and lakes.

"It reminds us of Lithuania," she said. "It reminds us of the Baltic Sea and the dunes."

That love for the Michiana region helped Rasa in choosing the location for Solasta Winery, close to Warren Dunes on Red Arrow Highway. The name itself is meant to symbolize the sun that unites the grapes in Lake Michigan shore growing regions. The location is easy to find, with the new sign and partially restored 1955 Plymouth Belvedere out front of the beautified building and property.

Within, visitors will find a cozy tasting room, emphasizing a welcome and comfortable atmosphere. Adjacent to the wine bar, a rectangle of soft chairs and a couch feels more like a living room, granting a view out the windows while encouraging conversation within. The nearby patio and yard gives customers an outdoor gathering space, sealed and supplied with heaters for the colder months and open to the air and sun in the warmer months. Rasa noted several times that Solasta is meant to be more than a tasting room and production space, with the design created specifically to communicate warmth and "genuine appreciation for all who visit".

Already, the winery has scheduled events that go beyond wine-tasting. In

See WINES, Page C3

PHOTOS BY JUSTIN FLAGEL | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

FERNWOOD TO HOST MOTHER'S DAY

FLOWER TOURS

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Looking for a fun way to celebrate the moms in your life? Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve will be hosting a guided tour of its gardens and nature preserve at 9, 10 and 11 a.m. Sunday, May 11. Guests can discover Fernwood's array of bulbs, wildflowers, and more. The event is free with admission – registration is encouraged though walk-ins may be accepted if space is available.

Blossomtime Parade kicks off May 10

COMMUNITY REPORT

The Cities of Benton Harbor and St. Joseph will be hosting the 2025 Grand Floral Parade on Saturday May 10.

The parade starts at 1 p.m. and road closures in St. Joseph will go into effect at 10 a.m. which includes all masted boat traffic using the Bicentennial Bridge. Traffic entering St. Joseph from the north will be detoured west onto Port St. and then south on Lake Blvd. Traffic wishing to continue south on M-63 will turn east onto Jones St. or continue south on Lake Boulevard for BL-94. Traffic coming from the south into St. Joseph will be diverted at westbound Jones St. and will follow the same route in reverse.

The detour will stay in effect until the end of the parade which will be approximately 3:30 p.m.

In the City of St. Joseph, there will be no parking along the following public streets which will start at 6 a.m. Saturday morning and continue until 4 p.m. at the conclusion of the parade. Any vehicles parked in these areas will be ticketed or towed.

1. 500 through the 1000 blocks of State Street.

2. 500 and 600 blocks of Market, Pearl, Park, Price and Jones Streets.

3. 700 through the 1000 blocks of Court Street.

4. 700 & 800 blocks of Park, Price, Jones and Hoyt Street.

5. 1000 block of Church Street.

6. 700 through the 1100 blocks of Pearl Street.

For Residents and businesses located along Anchor's Way, please be aware that the Bicentennial Bridge will be closed from 10 a.m. to approx. 4 p.m. on Saturday May 10.

Attendees will be able to exit the area, however they must head into St. Joseph and follow the detour. Attendees are asked to drive slow and use caution as emergency vehicles may travel against traffic in these lanes. Entry into the area is prohibited while the parade route is closed.

Blankets and chairs in the city of St. Joseph will not be allowed on the parade route until 6 a.m. on the day of the parade. Any blankets or chairs placed before that time will be removed and taken to the St. Joseph Department of Public Services located on Broad Street in St. Joseph.

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

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Southold Dance Theater to perform 'Sleeping Beauty'

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, IND. — As part of its milestone 50th anniversary season, nationally recognized pre-professional ballet company Southold Dance Theater is bringing one of ballet's most beloved fairy tales, Sleeping Beauty, to The DeBartolo Performing Arts Center this May.

Tickets for Southold Dance Theater's production of Sleeping Beauty are on sale now at DeBartolo Performing Arts Center's website, PerformingArts.ND.edu, and Southold-Dance.org, with showtimes scheduled for:

•Friday, May 23, at 7 p.m.

•Saturday, May 24, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

•Sunday, May 25, at 2 p.m.

Set to Tchaikovsky's timeless score, this full-length classical ballet features fairy godmothers, an evil sorceress, and a spell-bound princess in a spectacular production highlighting the remarkable talent and artistry that has defined Southold Dance Theater for 50 years.

"Sleeping Beauty is a magical production that brings together generations of our community," said Sarah Taylor, Executive Director of Southold Dance Theater. "As we celebrate 50 years, it's an honor to share this classic ballet with a community that's supported us for so long. Seeing families make memories together while our dancers shine on stage makes it all the more meaningful."

Southold Dance Theater proudly welcomes accomplished guest artists for all Sleeping Beauty performances. Derek Drilon of Joffrey Ballet and Simon Plant of Cincinnati Ballet will enhance the production with their professional artistry. Talented freelance choreographer, dancer, and Southold faculty member Abby Marchesseault will perform alongside distinguished Southold alumnus Tom Zusi to round out this impressive group of guest artists.

For more information about Southold Dance Theater, visit Southold-Dance.org.

JUSTIN FLAGEL | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

WINES

Continued from page C1

addition to inviting customers to bring their clubs or personal celebrations, they've hosted yoga events, life coach workshops, and floral arrangement classes. As they expand into the space, they may eventually also provide small entertainment options for customers to enjoy.

Solasta's wines are made mostly from nineteen varieties of Michigan grapes grown from farms in the region. The selection honors the variety of Michigan styles, with a nod to European wine. The assortment provides something for all tastes, whether they be sweet and fruity or dry or bubbly. Wine flights are available for those who'd like to try multiple options. Seasonal drinks are also available, from mulled wine to sangria, mimosas, and wine slushies. Charcuteries boards and smores are also available for those looking for a snack.

Rasa has set out to create a sense of the "Solasta family" among her customers. Flights come with a take-home wine glass to remind customers of their visit and a free wine club offers a variety of benefits and exclusive events. Her staff is trained to not only guide guests through their wine journey, but to create an inviting and memorable experience.

The opening of Solasta Winery is the culmination of years of planning and dreaming for Rasa. She emphasizes that she is just getting started, with plans to shift much of her production into the tasting room building and adding more events to create a destination for gathering and sharing in the story of wine.

Information on Solasta Winery, including events, can be found at solastawinery.com.

Los Lonely Boys to perform at Four Winds New Buffalo

COMMUNITY REPORT

NEW BUFFALO — The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians' Four Winds Casinos have announced that Los Lonely Boys will perform at Four Winds New Buffalo's Silver Creek Event Center at 9 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8.

Ticket prices for the show start at $35, plus applicable fees, and can be purchased online at Ticketmaster beginning on Friday, April 18 at 10 a.m. Eastern. Hotel rooms are available on the night of the concert and can be purchased with event tickets.

Leveraging the power of their connection, brothers communicate in their own vernacular understood by one another, yet alien to the rest of the world. Los Lonely Boys speak the typically unspoken language of brotherhood out loud in their music. The Grammy Award-winning multiplatinum San Angelo, Texas trio—Henry Garza [vocals, guitar], Jojo Garza [bass, vocals], and Ringo Garza [drums]—have welcomed audiences into their family with open arms since emerging back in 1996. Scaling one mountain at a time, they have summited unprecedented heights.

2004's seminal self-titled, Los Lonely Boys, reached double-platinum status and yielded the gold-certified generational smash "Heaven," which cracked the Top 20 of the Billboard Hot 100 and notched a GRAMMY® Award in the category of "Best Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal." In its wake, Sacred bowed at No. 2 on the Billboard 200, paving the way for fan favorites Forgiven [2008], Rockpango [2011], and Revelation [2013]. Along the way, they collaborated with legends such as Santana, Willie Nelson, and Dr. John in addition to performing everywhere from the World Series to CMT's Crossroads.

However, the light at the heart of their brotherhood shines as brightly as ever on their 2023 debut for BMG and much more to come.

"These are the only guys I've played with my whole life," laughs Jojo. "So, there's nothing like it. We do have a language without words. It's built through vibrations and sound."

"It happens on stage and when we're in the studio," agrees Ringo. "We all feel it. We can look at each other and not say anything, because we instinctively know where we're going. It's hard to explain. Real blood is thicker than music."

"When we're on stage, we're trying to grab these feelings from the ether and put them together as one voice," observes Henry. "As a three-piece band, there's a special connection, but being brothers, we have a whole different level of camaraderie. Even outside of the music industry, we can all feel the truth, beauty, and strength behind a family working together. If my brothers and I decided to be lawyers or plumbers, it'd be just as powerful as the band, because we'd be doing it together. The world could never rip it apart. We'll always keep going."

2004's seminal self-titled, Los Lonely Boys, reached double-platinum status and yielded the gold-certified generational smash "Heaven," which cracked the Top 20 of the Billboard Hot 100 and notched a GRAMMY® Award in the category of "Best Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal." In its wake, Sacred bowed at No. 2 on the Billboard 200, paving the way for fan favorites Forgiven [2008], Rockpango [2011], and Revelation [2013]. Along the way, they collaborated with legends such as Santana, Willie Nelson, and Dr. John in addition to performing everywhere from the World Series to CMT's Crossroads.

They've proven that.

After 23 years of relentless recording and touring, Los Lonely Boys mutually agreed to take a rest in 2019. As family, communication never ceased though. With the pandemic, "one domino fell after another," and the break lengthened due to extenuating circumstances.

"It's like the Higher Power above mandated we take a little hiatus," says Henry. "We were being told to stop, and it just so happened to be right before COVID."

"It was essentially a sabbatical," says Jojo. "Once music is in your blood, it's in your blood for eternity."

As such, a different kind of divinity stepped in to interrupt the band's slumber. The Who invited Los Lonely Boys to open a string of shows around Cinco De Mayo in 2022. They agreed, because, well who can say, "No" to The Who?

"It was confirmation like this is what we're supposed to do, man." Jojo states.

"The shows were emotional," admits Ringo. "We wanted to make sure we played well for the audiences. The nerves went away once we got on stage, but there were a lot of tears. It was like no time had passed between us. It sparked everything up again. We didn't need to say anything. We were all writing again and went, 'Let's record!'"

Fittingly, they turn the page on this next chapter with "Send More Love." Acoustic strumming gives way to a dreamy guitar melody as the hook pleads, "This world is going crazy, can you send more love?" It culminates on a powerful chant underlined by eloquent six-string soul.

"There's so much suffering in the world," sighs Henry. "You look around and see craziness everywhere on social media, in the news, at dinner tables, and during every conversation. I sat down, and the song came through me. I imagined dialing the phone and talking to God. It's like a broke kid at school who's running out of money and calling his parents. We're asking the heavenly father, 'Could you send more love down here? We're going broke'."

"The last time Henry wrote a song like this we went worldwide," chuckles Jojo. "We all thought 'Send More Love' was special."

Maintaining their creative momentum with Jojo spearheading production, the follow-up "Dance With Me" channels the bliss of true love in all of its movements.

"It's basically the whole concept of a man and woman experiencing the dance of life and the dance of love together as one," he reveals. "It's a powerful song in different way. It's representative of Los Lonely Boys, but with a more modern twist."

In the end, Los Lonely Boys channel the strength of their brotherhood and share it with the world.

"We do what we do because something greater than all of us has given us the ability to do so," Jojo leaves off. "We don't take credit for any of this. We're simply thankful to do this together."

"I record for my brothers," Ringo adds. "I want to impress them. If they love it, I love it, and we all love it, it seems like fans will too. It's the same formula. Family first."

"We're still familia," Henry concludes. "And we're going to give it our all until our last breath, man."

More information on Los Lonely Boys can be found at www.loslonelyboys.com.

nitro zone

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